The Book of The "CHEESE"

TRAITS & STORIES OF A JOHNSONIAN HAUNT

Fourth Edition

T. FISHER UNWIN
11 PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS
LONDON, E.C.
1901

THE

Book of the Cheese

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"TODDY AT THE CHESHIRE CHEESE." *By W. Dendy Sadler.*

THE

Book of the Cheese

BEING TRAITS AND STORIES OF

"Y^E OLDE CHESHIRE CHEESE"

WINE OFFICE COURT, FLEET STREET
LONDON, E.C.

COMPILED BY THE LATE T. W. REID

THIRD EDITION REVISED BY WILLIAM HUSSEY GRAHAM

FOURTH EDITION

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WALTER ALLEN & GEORGE CRUICKSHANK

"Shall I not take mine ease in mine inn?"—SHAKESPEARE

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PREFACE

TO

THE FOURTH EDITION

TO OUR FRIENDS AND CUSTOMERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

In the present edition, while most of the matter which has appeared in previous editions of our little book has been retained, we have deleted portions that we considered could be dispensed with, and added some fresh incidents and reminiscences that we think may add to its interest. We have, besides, enlarged the work by the addition of an excerpt from "Where Ghosts Walk," by Marion Harland, and an

illustrated account of "State Pageants through Fleet Street," by Henry Johnson, which we hope will prove of historical interest to all lovers of our ancient city.

Yours obediently,

B. A. MOORE & SON.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

IN TEXT

INTRODUCTION

THE history of the inn is, in no small degree, the literary history of England.

Not one amongst the curious and complex varieties of our English social institutions has been more tenderly and truthfully dealt with in English literature than the English inn or tavern; the strange fascination for it has spread and has taken our cousins across the Atlantic, with whom the poet of the "Wayside Inn," Longfellow, still ranks as foremost. He and Tennyson, and others of their contemporaries, are

but creatures—God's noblest creatures none the less—of modern growth; but, to the lover of the literature common to all the Anglo-Saxon race recourse must be had to the beginning, to the time when the praises of the English inn and its life and surroundings were sung by Dan Chaucer, "the morning star of song,"

> The first warbler whose sweet breath
> Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
> The spacious times of great Elizabeth
> With sounds that echo still;

and so on through him to the days of the last Laureate, and, as will be seen in a poem given in the course of this book, to the days of one poet, at least, later than Tennyson.

Upon the very threshold of our modern civilisation, when the passing of the night of our dark ages was harbingered by that "morning star of song," we meet in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" with the Tabard, the old English inn, in all its glory, the memories of which abide with us, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. They have all passed away, alas! those inns and taverns—the places to stay in and the places to sport in—the Tabard, the Mermaid, the Boar's Head, the Devil, the Mitre, and the rest of them—and have all but left not a rack behind. They have all gone—save one, with which the following pages are mainly concerned, Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese.

But before dealing in particular with Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, may one not go back for a moment to the glorious list of ancestral taverns of which that old Fleet Street house is the last survivor?

Chaucer's Tabard! the old Southwark inn demolished years ago, who would not fain have been

there that April day, now more than five hundred years since, when there met there the Canterbury pilgrims:

> Well nine & twenty in a companie
> Of sundry folk?

Do they not all come before us, a goodly host, the friends of our fathers, the friends of ourselves, and destined, we trust, despite the fierce race for wealth, to be the friends of our children? The eternal commonplace—the commonplace of the altar and the tomb—is always with us, and the eternal commonplace of our daily life is nowhere more conspicuous than in the life of the Tabard and of every other old inn or tavern.

Nothing can efface from the memory the people who met half a thousand years ago at the old Tabard. Are they not as visible to the mind's eye as any other creations of fiction? Is there less reality about the Knight in his fustian, and the Wife of Bath in her wimple and hat, than about Uncle Toby, for instance, and the Widow Wadman? Does not Madame Eglantine lisp her French of Stratford atte Bowe as if she were one of the characters in a play of Congreve or Sheridan? And is not the Summoner, with his "cherubin's fire-red" face and his love to drink strong wine "red as blood," and when he had well drunk to speak no word but Latin, a companion not unworthy of Lieutenant Bardolph and Ancient Pistol? And in the Poor Parson and his brother the Ploughman, does not Chaucer seem to cast the pathos of Dickens about the short and simple annals of the poor? And over and above all, in the person of Mine Host:

> A seemly man withal,
> Bold of his speech, and wys and well i-taught,

we get a perfect delineation of the host of the good old times. No sycophant or time-server is he in presence of a customer, washing his hands with invisible soap in imperceptible water, but a man who holds his own with the best, makes himself the life and soul of the party, deals with his guests rather as a genial host proffering hospitality to one and all than a mere purveyor of meat and drink; a type of landlord now almost as extinct as the old inn over which he did indeed preside, but lingering, it may be, here and there, and not absolutely unknown in one court off Fleet Street in this city of London of ours.

The cataclysm of the Wars of the Roses submerged, in company with almost every other element of English social life, the English inn. And when we pass, and without regret, from the shambles of the fifteenth century, and leave all their bloody memories behind us, we find ourselves in the pure and wholesome atmosphere of the Elizabethan age, with all its fun and frolic, and its seriousness and deep insight into the things of this world and the other withal. The hostelry, as we meet with it in the literature of the reign of Elizabeth—although we do not forget the inn at Gadshill, or the Garter at Windsor, or the Elephant in that unnamed city of Illyria where Sebastian stayed—ceases to be the guest-house proper, and becomes what the tavern was in the days of Dr. Johnson, a place for wits and others to meet and take their ease with Falstaff's successors in their inn. Of the Shakesperean Era inns the most famous type is the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, the place in which the main comic scenes of the most exquisite play in Shakesperean comedy are laid: the trank where the old boar Falstaff wallowed; where he begat

those lies that "are like the father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable": where Prince Hal, in all the equality which only a tavern can give, was one with Poins; where, as in the grave, all are equal and the servant is one with his master. Shakespeare's Boar's Head, of course, was burnt in the Great Fire of London, which, alas! spared not even the old Old Cheshire Cheese; and the room at the Boar's Head, in the last century, where Oliver Goldsmith had that immortal vision of his of Falstaff and Prince Hal and the rest, was but a poet's dream. Goldsmith's Boar's Head, however, did last well on into the present century, and was only removed to clear the ground for the approach to London Bridge; its site is not, as is generally supposed, the spot from which William the Fourth from his statue seems to look out over Shakespeare's beloved Southwark; it must have been west of that.

The Mermaid in Bread Street was a still more perfect prototype of the Johnsonian tavern than the Boar's Head in Eastcheap itself. Frank Beaumont, "the deeper, sweeter, nobler" member of the immortal partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher, has immortalised the Mermaid as the trysting-place of all the wits that were his contemporaries. Who that has once read can ever forget the undying lines he addressed from his exile in the country to "rare old" Ben?—

> What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble and so full of subtle flame
> As if that everyone from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole within a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life.

But yet more famous than the Mermaid, as a haunt of literary men, if one may so describe the giants of Ben Jonson's time, who fought, and not unworthily, with gods, was the Devil, in Fleet Street, at which the meetings of the Apollo Club were held. The sign of the tavern, the Devil, is naturally accounted for by the proximity of the church dedicated to St. Dunstan. The famous inscription, in letters of gold, written over the entrance to the Apollo room, and the bust of Phœbus Apollo himself, are still preserved at Child's Bank and regarded as amongst the most precious heirlooms of that ancient firm. The inscription ends, as is well known, with Jonson's lines:

Wine!
'Tis the true Phœbean liquor,
Cheers the brain, makes wit go quicker,
Pays all debts, cures all diseases,
And at once three senses pleases.
Welcome all who lead or follow
To the Oracle of Apollo!

Alas! the tavern, like all else that contributed to make London life lighter and brighter, fell under the ban of the sour fanaticism of those Puritans of the baser sort, of whom Praise God Barebones is a characteristic specimen (Praise God Barebones, by the way, was a Fleet Street man, whose original surname of Barbon was changed by his enemies to Barebones); and with the Restoration a formidable rival to the tavern arose in the coffee-houses, which became the haunt of all who would have themselves thought wits. The City was the home of the tavern: the then West End, the now dreary district about Covent Garden, that of the coffee-house. Of all the

ENTRANCE TO THE "OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE" IN WINE OFFICE COURT

From an Original Drawing by Herbert Railton

coffee-houses, Will's, the haunt of Dryden, would seem to have had the greatest vogue. Pilgrims to the Cheshire Cheese may be interested to know that, when they go there to see Dr. Johnson's seat, they are but following the example of the Sage himself, who tells us :

"When I was a young fellow, I wanted to write the life of Dryden, and in order to get materials I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him ; these were old Swinney and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's Coffee-house, Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter and then called his winter chair, and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and then called his summer chair.' I went and sat in it."

Verily all things are always the same : Dryden's worshipper, Johnson, and Dryden's seat at Will's a hundred and fifty years ago, and Johnson's worshippers and Johnson's seat at the Old Cheshire Cheese to-day !

The coffee-houses had their little day and ceased to be : man, being reasonable, cannot delight in coffee alone. Gradually the tavern regained its old ascendancy. First the coffee-houses were deserted in the evening, and the men who had taken their morning dish of coffee at the Bedford, or the Cocoa Tree, or Will's adjourned in the evening for a more jovial entertainment at the Cheshire Cheese, or the Devil, or the Mitre. Then they were left altogether. Addison and Swift and Steele had passed away, and a generation grew up which knew not St. James's. We hear little or nothing of Johnson in the coffee-

house, but in the taverns—and especially in the taverns in and around Fleet Street—the Doctor, like Solomon of old, was in all his glory.

Thanks to the fact that we have one specimen of the Johnsonian tavern remaining practically the same as it was in the Johnsonian days, we can still depict for ourselves, with but the slightest effort of the imagination, what must have been the scene at the Cheshire Cheese in the dear old Doctor's time. We can fancy the flame flashing forth then, as it is flashing now, from the giant grate, and casting its flickering light upon the old oak wainscotting. We can see Johnson in his favourite seat, mouthing and talking as who should say, "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my mouth let no dog bark." One friend or other is never wanting to keep the most clubable though surliest of men company in his best-beloved tavern; there Boswell may be seen, with eyes fixed reverentially upon the Sage, drinking in every one of his words, to be committed to the Diary and serve as material for that undying Life of his. Goldsmith is seldom absent; not, as is generally reputed in the earlier traditions, rarely speaking in presence of the Doctor, but daring at times, as in the well-known story about the kidney, so to corner the great Samuel by his riposte that the old bear growls out at length: "Well, Sir, I have deserved it. I should not have provoked so foolish an answer by so foolish a question." Rarer visitors we can see there, while the Doctor is taking his ease in his inn. Burke, when not giving up to faction what was meant for mankind, is an occasional visitor who dares, to Boswell's horror, dispute the Sage's claim to monopolise the conversation. Langton is there, with all his six foot six, with

one leg thrown over the other and with hands clasped over the knee, casting upon the wall behind the "board" a shadow as of some antediluvian animal or the strange man-eating plant that strikes one with fear, and the typical aristocrat Beauclerk, who is not afraid to gird at the Sage himself, and many another who, being dead to us, yet speak in the old room at the Cheshire Cheese.

Even in Johnson's time the tavern as a club was beginning to fall into comparative decay. Fashion was voting for the club proper, proprietary or otherwise, and the habit of ceasing to live in the City carried away the old frequenters of the Fleet Street taverns into the suburbs or the more distant environs of London. And then, to crown all, came the railways. The railways have much to answer for: the old order has indeed changed, yielding place to new, and the cosy inn with its host and hostess has given way to the desert caravanserai with its pompous Teutonic manager: the tavern parlour to the flaunting gin palace. So passes the glory of the world. That delightful Washington Irving—earliest predecessor of the many American authors who in these later days have soared to tell the praises of the last surviving old City tavern—gives us in his "Sketch Book" a charming account of one of the city of London hostelries, as it was at the beginning of this nineteenth century. The opening of the description would serve for the Cheshire Cheese of to-day. "This has been a temple of Mirth and Wine from time immemorial. It has always been in the family, so that its history is tolerably well preserved by the present landlord. It was much frequented by the gallants and cavalieros of the reign of Elizabeth, and

was looked into now and then by the wits of Charles the Second. The members of the club which now holds its weekly sessions there abound in old catches, glees, and choice stories that are traditional in the place. The life of the club, and indeed the prime wit of the neighbourhood, is mine host himself. At the opening of every club night he is called in to sing his 'Confession of Faith,' which is the famous old drinking troll from Gammer Gurton's 'Needle.'" Washington Irving gives the words of the four verses of the song with chorus, the first of which, as a specimen of an old-time City tavern song, may suffice to be produced here:

I cannot eate but little meat,
My stomack is not good;
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am acold.
I stuff my skin so full within
With jolly good ale and old.

Chorus: Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foote and hand go cold:
But, belly! God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

From the time of Dr. Johnson down to the present day unbroken links of tradition connect the Cheshire Cheese of the end of the nineteenth century with the Cheshire Cheese of the eighteenth, and through that with all the glorious list of taverns in story, which begin with the Tabard and pass on, through the Mermaid and the rest, to the old house in Wine Office Court. This venerable survivor of a vanished race has a double

THE MAIN HALL

interest for every man in whom the soul is not dead: to the lover of antiquity in general it appeals as the type of the place our forefathers loved; to the lover of the Johnsonian cycle, and old Sam Johnson himself in particular, it appeals as enabling him to represent to life to himself what that race of giants did, where they ate and drank, and where they talked. That they had reason for their choice of an inn, and could give a reason for that choice too, may be seen best from the famous passage in Boswell, with which this introduction to an account of a place that Boswell must have loved may well close.

"There is no private house in which people can enjoy themselves so well as at a capital tavern. Let there be ever so great plenty of good things, ever so much grandeur, ever so much elegance, ever so much desire that everybody should be easy, in the nature of things it cannot be; there must always be some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests, the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him; and no man but a very impudent dog indeed can as freely command what is in another man's house as if it were his own. Whereas, at a tavern, there is a general freedom from anxiety. You are sure you are welcome, and the more noise you make, the more trouble you give" (we should remember that this was said in the rougher world of the last century), "the more good things you call for, the welcomer you are. No servants will attend you with the alacrity which waiters do who are incited by the prospect of an immediate reward in proportion as they please. No, Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or

inn." He then repeated with great emotion Shenstone's lines :

> Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn.

Right so ! thou brawny Titan, thou noblest encomiast of the inn or tavern.

STAIRCASE IN "OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE"

From an Original Drawing by Herbert Railton

CHAPTER I

EARLY HISTORY OF YE OLDE CHESHIRE CHEESE

Time consecrates ;
And what is grey with age becomes religion.—SCHILLER

"THANK goodness! ALL the old houses are not gone!" was the hearty expression used the other day by an old countryman, as he and I sat enjoying a delicious rump steak at the Old Cheshire Cheese, Fleet Street. And my old friend chuckled as he raised a foaming tankard of bitter ale to his mouth. "Ah," continued he, "it is forty odd years since I first came about 'The Cheese,' and that ain't yesterday. In that time what changes have occurred, and what 'improvements' have been made in eating and drinking! Improvements, indeed! Nowadays you are ushered into improved places that are simply gin palaces; and when you order a steak you are supplied with a bit of cork, while your beer resembles in body what I would suppose might be the washings of brewers' aprons. Thank goodness, I repeat, ALL the old houses are not gone; and here's still further prosperity to the Old

Cheshire Cheese!" And my old friend had another deep dip into his tankard. But he was not done talking even then. "Forty odd years, I tell you again, ain't yesterday; and during all that time I have been coming about this house. And I can safely say that I never yet got a bad article in the way of food, from a sausage to a rump steak pudding; or in drink, from a half-pint of stout to a bottle of Bass, or from a glass of Marston's bitter to a beaker of Périnet's champagne."

Thus my companion set me thinking about old taverns in general, and the Old Cheshire Cheese in particular. I knew it had a history, but I had never even thought of prying into it. At once I resolved that I would take Mrs. Chick's advice, and "make an effort!" And I feel assured that, if the reader will accompany me through the following pages, he may possibly, as I have done, derive not only amusement but instruction from their perusal. Not, be it noted, gentle reader, from anything I myself particularly supply, but from looking over some of the details of the authentic records which I have turned up, and now, in part, reproduce. It would, indeed, be injustice to the ancient tavern itself, and to its present genial and enterprising landlord, were such interesting information in the way of good old "folk-lore" to be lost to tavern-loving posterity. I will only further remark here, in an epigram the authorship of which, I believe, is unknown:

> Earth has no land,—no land a town, I wis,—
> Nor town a house,—nor house a lord,—like this.

. . . . . .

Although the origin of the Old Cheshire Cheese

(formerly spelt "Ye Olde Cheshire Chese") is not altogether involved in obscurity, there is a decided want of complete, or even semi-complete, details as to its very early history.

The reader may remember it was in the Old Cheshire Cheese that the dispute arose about who would most quickly make the best couplet:

I, Sylvester,
Kiss'd your sister.

When the retort was:

I, Ben Jonson,
Kiss'd your wife.

"But that's not rhyme," said Sylvester. "No," said Jonson; "but it's true." And thus they passed the merry nights, "nor thought of care or woe," although there was plenty of both very much about at the time.

A later poet, Lord Tennyson, himself a frequenter of the "Cheese" in his young days, confesses the influence of "a pint of port," so doubtless his elder brethren, warmed with good cheer, would grow or imagine they grew

. . . . In worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men.

It was in the Old Cheshire Cheese that Isaac Bickerstaff made the epigram:

When late I attempted your pity to move,
What made you so deaf to my prayers?
Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But—why did you kick me down stairs?

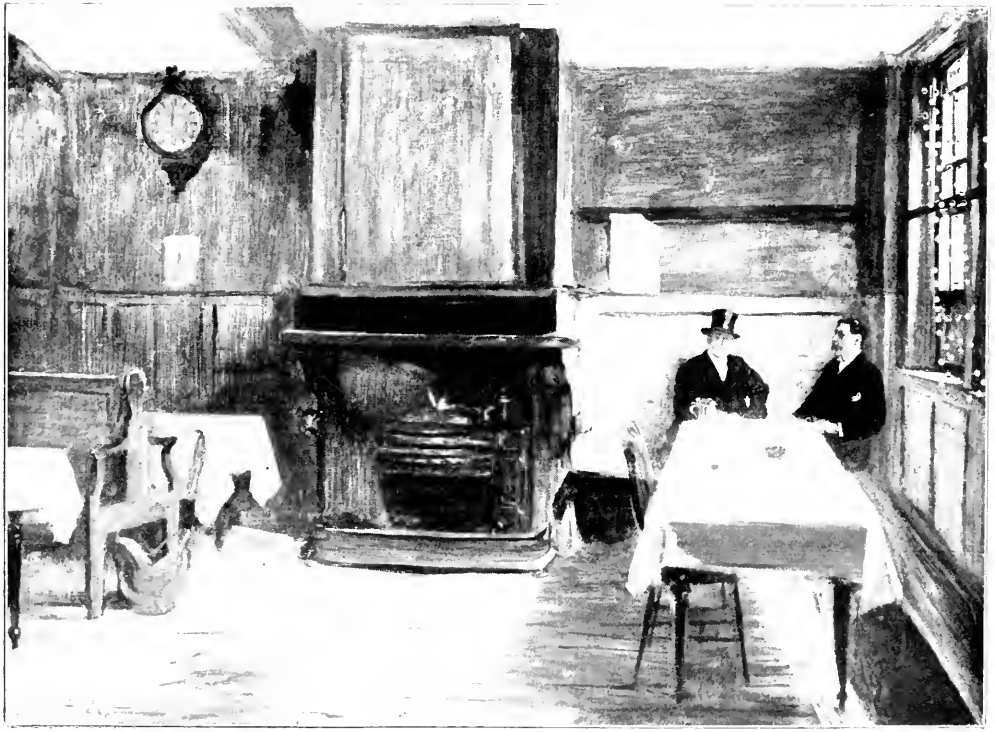
In fact, the "Cheese" was famous for epigrammatists. Ah! who would not give a year of his life to sit and listen to the wit and humour of the ancient frequenters of the Old Cheshire Cheese? But the smart things said in the same house, even in the present time of universal genius, are not to be despised. Who would not give a finger off his hand to get a look of the face of the old glutton and scandalmonger to whom, in the "Cheese," the following lines were solemnly presented?—

You say your teeth are dropping out—
  A serious cause of sorrow,
Not likely to be cured, I doubt,
  To-day, or yet to-morrow.

But good may come of this distress,
  While under it you labour,
If, losing teeth, you guzzle less,
  And don't backbite your neighbour.

That, in later days, although even the period is now termed "old times," Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, and other great men were in the habit of frequenting the Old Cheshire Cheese, there can be no manner of doubt. Full well those great men knew what they were about in choosing their place of rendezvous, for I find from a *brochure* entitled "Round London" (1725), that the house is described as "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese Tavern, near ye Flete Prison, an eating-house for goodly fare." In the time of Charles II. chop and coffee houses were great political clubs, where men discussed severely the conduct of His Majesty. Harris, in his "Life of Charles II.," vol. ii., p. 278, says:

"1675. It appears that the King afforded the citizens abundant matter for animadversion, and that



THE JOHNSONIAN CORNER

By Seymour Lucas, R.A.

they indulged themselves in this way so much to his dissatisfaction, and that of his cabal ministry, that a proclamation was issued, December 29, for shutting up and suppressing all coffee-houses—

"'Because in such houses, and by occasion of the meeting of disaffected persons in them, divers false, malicious, and scandalous reports were devised and spread abroad, to the defamation of His Majesty's Government, and to the disturbance of the quiet and peace of the realm.'"

The increase in the number of taverns and wine vaults in the year 1552 engaged the attention of Parliament; and it was enacted that the number of retailers of wine in London should not exceed forty; nor those of Westminster exceed three (Stat. 7 Edw. VI. c. 5).

"Gascoyn, Guien, and French wines to be sold not above 8*d.* the gallon within any of the King's dominions; Rochel wines at 4*d.* the gallon; any other wines of no higher valuation than 12*d.* a gallon."

Queen Mary, however, dispensed with this Act, and we find in 1564 the whole number of mere vintners and such as sold wine by retail in London amounted to 128.

Wine Office Court, where the Cheshire Cheese is situated, took its name from the fact that wine licences were granted in a building close by. The present "wine office" of the Old Cheshire Cheese is exactly at the junction of the court and Fleet Street, the door being the first on the right, as shown in the accompanying beautiful drawing by Mr. Herbert Railton.

"In this court," says Mr. Noble, "once flourished a fig tree, planted a century ago by the vicar of St.

Bride's, who resided, with an absence of pride suitable if not common to Christianity, at No. 12. It was a slip from another exile of a tree formerly flourishing in a sooty kind of grandeur at the sign of the Fig Tree in Fleet Street."

"THE COSY CORNER" IN "OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE"

By Seymour Lucas, R.A.

CHAPTER II

JOHNSON AND GOLDSMITH AT THE "CHEESE"

There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn.—JOHNSON.

NOT the least delightful characteristic of the "Cheese" is the persistency of its old customers. Those who once have been admitted to its charmed circle soon become wedded to its ways and remain faithful to the house till death do them part, or circumstances scarcely less unpleasant decree their disappearance from the hospitable board. It is not merely to the goodly cheer provided there that this loyalty is due, although, no doubt, to the viands and the wines a share of it is to be attributed. An anecdote of the late Mr. George Augustus Sala, the well-known writer, *Daily Telegraph* special correspondent, and genial *bon vivant* and gastronomist, is delightfully illustrative of the attractions of the place from the side of the creature comforts. The story is told by the London correspondent of the *Liverpool Courier* (December 10, 1895) in recording Mr. Sala's death. He writes:

"Some years ago Mr. Sala went to Paris on behalf of the *Daily Telegraph*, to write on the subject of French cooking and French restaurants. Such praise of Parisian kickshaws was never lavished before, and the extollation, to the complete discomfiture of English cooks, lasted for fully six weeks. Everything in the cooking line in Paris was grand, everything in England in the same line was horrible. At the end of the six weeks Mr. Sala returned to London, went immediately to the Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street and said to the head waiter—'William, bring me a beefsteak, some potatoes in their jackets, and a pint of ale. I've had nothing to eat for six weeks.'"

The sentimental attractions are equally strong, and their influence is felt even by the most occasional of guests whose situation in life, or whose distance from London, unfortunately precludes the possibility of their being regular attendants at the hostelry. A fine acrostic sent to the landlord by the Rev. Wm. Kerr-Smith, Vicar of Whiteby, Newcastle-on-Tyne, embodies some of the thoughts that naturally arise in the mind of the cultivated visitant:

C hanged are the times and changed, alas, the guests!
H ow changed from those who erst with gossip stored
E ach day saw grouped about thy cheerful board!
S till are their voices now, whose noisy jests
H ave filled these rooms with laughter. Gathered here
I n rare confusion Beau, and Wit and Sage,
R ich, Poor and Spendthrift, Youth and fuller age
E njoyed whilst yet they might thy festive cheer.

C areless of censure each one told his tale,
H eard the last scandal as he quaffed his ale.
E ager to praise, they scrupled not to school,
E njoyed the folly but condemned the fool.
S o lived they far removed from dulness dire,
E schewed the commonplace and tuned the lyre.

The guests no doubt, as our reverend rhymer says, have changed; for good living—even the best the "Cheese" provides—cannot confer an immortality here below. The illustrious guests whose names head this chapter have ceased to be, yet the "Cheese" is redolent with memories of them, though to that spirit of affection for the house of which I have spoken we are indebted for the evidence which proves beyond the possibility of cavil their constant attendance there.

Goldsmith's lodging was at No. 6 Wine Office Court, nearly opposite the "Cheese," and here he wrote the "Vicar of Wakefield." It was on Johnson's first visit to supper here with Goldsmith that Percy called for him on his way, and found him dressed in a new suit of clothes and well-powdered wig. Noticing Johnson's unusual smartness, he heard from him the reason of it. "Sir, Goldsmith is a great sloven, and justifies his disregard of propriety by my practice. To-night I desire to show him a better example." Johnson's house, where the Dictionary was compiled, was within a minute's walk, in Gough Square. Boswell does not record any visits to the "Cheese," but Boswell's acquaintance with Johnson began when Johnson was an old man, when he had given up the house in Gough Square, and Goldsmith had long departed from Wine Office Court. At the best, Boswell only knew Johnson's life in widely separated sections. Boswell was in Edinburgh while Johnson was in Bolt Court, and it is certain Johnson wrote no diary for the benefit of his biographer. Witnesses who were on the spot supply the deficiency. In the first edition of this work Mr. Reid gave some interesting extracts from a little book published by

Mr. Cyrus Jay in 1868. The book was entitled "The Law—What I have Seen, Heard, and Known," and was dedicated—

TO THE

LAWYERS AND GENTLEMEN

WITH WHOM I HAVE DINED FOR MORE THAN

HALF A CENTURY

AT

THE OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE TAVERN

WINE OFFICE COURT, FLEET STREET

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THEIR OBEDIENT SERVANT

CYRUS JAY

The somewhat garrulous old gentleman in his preface says: "During the fifty-five years that I have frequented the Cheshire Cheese Tavern . . . . there have been only three landlords. When I first visited the house I used to meet several very old gentlemen, who remembered Dr. Johnson, nightly at the Cheshire Cheese; and they have told me, what is not generally known, that the Doctor, whilst living in the Temple, always went to the Mitre or the Essex Head; but when he removed to Gough Square and Bolt Court he was a constant visitor at the Cheshire Cheese, because nothing but a hurricane would have induced him to cross Fleet Street." Mr. Jay's fifty-five years, from 1868, take us back to 1813, or little more than a quarter of a century after the death of Johnson. But

who then was Mr. Jay, and what was his credibility? "I have heard," says Dr. Birkbeck Hill, that indefatigable inquirer into Johnsonian facts and dates, "a member of our (the Johnson) club relate that, when he was a student of law, there used to be pointed out to him in the Cheshire Cheese an old gentleman who, day after day, was always to be found there, prolonging his dinner by an unbroken succession of glasses of gin and water. It was as a kind of awful warning of the depths to which a lawyer might sink, that this toper was shown, and it was added in a whisper that he was the son of Jay, of Bath. Jay, of Bath, is well-nigh forgotten now, but during the first half of the present century his fame as a preacher stood exceedingly high. It was Cyrus Jay, his son, who for fifty-three years frequenting this ancient tavern, preserved and handed down this curious tradition of Johnson. The landlord has told me how, in his childhood, he used to hear in the distance the gruff voice of the old gentleman as he came along Fleet Street, and how sometimes he was sent to see Mr. Jay safe home to his chambers at 15 Serjeants' Inn hard by. For most of his long life, port, that medium liquor, neither like claret for boys nor brandy for heroes, but the drink for men, had been his favourite beverage. A failing income brought him down at last to gin and water. He used to comfort himself by the reflection that he could get twice as drunk for half the money. He dined in the tavern to the very end. One evening he was led home to his lodgings, and within four-and-twenty hours he was dead. He was the last frequenter of the Old Cheshire Cheese who knew the men who had known Johnson. Mine host remembers a still older guest, Dr. Pooley by name, a barrister, who

died about 1856, at the age of eighty. Night after night for many a long year he had dined at half-past seven to the minute on a 'follower,' the end chop of the loin. He, too, used to tell of the men of his younger days, who boasted that they had often spent an evening there with Dr. Samuel Johnson."

Another writer, Mr. Cyrus Redding, who came to live in Gough Square in 1806, in his "Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal," published in 1858, takes us a little further back. He says:

"I often dined at the Cheshire Cheese. Johnson and his friends, I was informed, used to do the same, and I was told I should see individuals who had met them there. This I found to be correct. The company was more select than in later times. Johnson had been dead about twenty years, but there were Fleet Street tradesmen who well remembered both Johnson and Goldsmith in this place of entertainment."

Mr. Cyrus Jay, deploring the loss of the Mitre, the Cock, and other old taverns, remarks, "There still remains the Old Cheshire Cheese, in Wine Office Court, which will afford the present generation, it is hoped, for some years to come, an opportunity of witnessing the kind of tavern in which our forefathers delighted to assemble for refreshment.

"In Wine Office Court, in the very centre of London, may still (1868) be found two fig trees in a very flourishing condition, from which cuttings have frequently been taken for the purpose of planting in the country; and some trees derived from this parent stock may still be seen in an extensive fig garden near Worthing, Sussex."

(It is thirty years since there were fig trees in

Wine Office Court; and the Worthing figs are as celebrated as York hams, or Southdown mutton, or Dover soles, or Cambridge asparagus, or a host of other local culinary famous things.)

"There was a Mr. Tyers, a silk merchant on Ludgate Hill, and Colonel Laurence, who carried the colours of the 20th regiment at the battle of Minden, ever fond of repeating that his regimental comrades bore the brunt on that memorable day. The evening was the time we thus met. There was also a sprinkling of lawyers, old demisoldes and men of science; among the latter was a Mr. Adams, an optician, of Fleet St.

"Colonel Laurence showed me Goldsmith's tomb in the Temple Churchyard; he was never tired of talking of his acquaintance with the poet, whom he knew when Goldsmith, as well as Johnson, lived hard by the Cheshire Cheese. I listened with eagerness to what these men of other days told me. Tyers broke a leg, and was confined to his bed for a long time, and the rubicund-cheeked Colonel passed the way of all the earth in a year or two after I first became acquainted with him. He used to speak of Goldsmith's ordinary person, and told me the poet never broke in upon the conversation when Johnson was talking.

"The left-hand room, entering the 'Cheshire,' and the table on the extreme right upon entering that room, was the table occupied by Johnson and his friends almost uniformly. This table and the room are now as they were when I first saw them, having had the curiosity to visit them recently. They were, and are still, as Johnson and his friends left them in their time. Goldsmith sat at Johnson's left hand."

But the public room on the ground floor was not the only place affected by Johnson and his friends. When they wished to retire from the madding crowd

DR. JOHNSON'S CHAIR

a little room on another floor supplied all the privacy they occasionally desired, and here to this day is carefully preserved the chair from which the Doctor thundered his *ex cathedrâ* denunciations.

CHAPTER III

AN AMERICAN ON THE "CHEESE"

Hard by there is the Cheshire Cheese,
A famous tap.—T. HOOD.

OPPOSITE page 7 appears a picture, not a very serious effort of art, albeit a truthful representation of Fleet Street, which shows the entrance to the famous Wine Office Court. In the first chapter we were dining with a friend distinguished for his rural simplicity. Now you must learn how we reached the guest chamber. Facing page 10 is a drawing of the main hall, with the bar on the left, and on the right the ancient stair, at the bottom of which a flood of light marks the way to *l'Amphitryon où l'on dine.*

Entering the dining-room we are confronted with a view something like the sketch facing p. 17.

The sketch facing p. 19 gives the appearance of the room on the opposite side.

These two sketches, lightly limned by the unerring pencil of Mr. Seymour Lucas, A.R.A., hang upon the walls, and are the basis upon which the artist built up his great picture of the Cheshire Cheese, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887. The Academy

picture is not in the "Cheese," but the following is a description of it from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of March 29, 1887: "It represents a scene in the Old Cheshire Cheese inn, and is entitled 'The Latest Scandal.' In one corner of the quaint old room, on the bench which is still pointed out as the place where Dr. Johnson used to sit, we see a typical group of the wits of the period. Some wear powder, while others have the full dark wigs of an older fashion still. One of the group, in the uniform of the Guards, is relating the latest scandal to the rest, and pointing over his shoulder towards two young beaux, who stand by the fireside. One of these wears his right arm in a sling, and has evidently come to grief in a duel on the previous night. He and his friend are mightily disconcerted to discover that their escapade has become the talk of the town, and that it is affording vast amusement to this group of scandal-mongers."

Below the original sketches hangs a photograph giving a pale idea of the picture. In the first sketch behold in the corner—the Johnsonian corner—"the counterfeit presentment of two brothers"—the brothers Moore, one the genial manager, the other his legal adviser, a limb of the law.

By far the finest picture of the "Cheese" as it appeared in the days of Johnson, is that by Mr. Dendy Sadler, exhibited in the Royal Academy (1895), and which we are enabled, by the courtesy of Mr. L. H. Lefèvre, 1A King Street, St. James's, to reproduce as the frontispiece to this book. "Toddy at the Cheshire Cheese" needs no description, and its excellence will be appreciated by everyone whose soul is open to artistic impressions.

The sketches by Mr. Lucas naturally do not pretend to give detail, and Mr. Sadler's picture rather shows the room as it was. The clock in the meantime has been moved to make room for the portrait of the Lexicographer, after Sir Joshua Reynolds. The drawing on next page is a faithful, or an almost faithful, representation of the existing condition of the celebrated chamber. The mutability of life is even exhibited in the "Cheese," for over the mantelpiece we see a kindly caricature of Sir Augustus Harris, the great manager of Drury Lane, who within the last few years was all too early snatched from our midst.

You have now seen the dining-room from two points of view; let me present it from another—that of Mr. Joseph Pennell, the well-known artist, whose drawings in *Harper's Weekly* I grieve to be unable to present here. His pen must accordingly make amends for the absence of his pencil. And anyone who knows the "Cheese" will see that Mr. Pennell's pen is as imaginative as Mr. Pennell's pencil. Writing in the number of November 12, 1887, he says:

"On my first coming to London, I had fortified myself, not with a course of English history, but by re-reading 'Pickwick.' My first Sunday morning, about one o'clock, I found myself in Chancery Lane outside the entrance to Lincoln's Inn, in the company of the proverbial solitary policeman and convivial cat. On my asking the policeman where in the world I could get something to eat—as it is well known one must starve in London on Sunday before one and after three—he gave me the inevitable answer, 'Down to the bottom, first to your left, under the lamp, up the passage, and there you are!'

After he had repeated these mysterious directions two or three times, and had found me hopelessly ignorant of his meaning, he did what I have very seldom known a London policeman to do—a proof of his loneliness; he walked to the end of Chancery Lane with me, and there being no one in Fleet

JOHNSON'S PORTRAIT AND SEAT

Street, pointed out the sign of the Cheshire Cheese. . . . A push at the door, and I have passed into another world. I was in a narrow hall, at the far end of which was a quaint bar, where, framed in by small panes, were two very pretty, but I cannot say fascinating, barmaids—I never could be fascinated by the ordinary English barmaid. Suddenly a waiter

with a very short nose came out of another room and screamed up the stairs: 'Cotherum steak. Boatherum foozlum mash. Fotherum coozlum, botherum steak!' and then remarked to me: 'Lunch, sir? Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. What can I get you, sir? Steak, sir; chop, sir; kidney, sir; potatoes, sir, cooked in their jackets, sir? Yes, sir; thank you, sir.' Then up the stairs he added: 'Underdone steak one!' Then to me again: 'Walk in, sir. Take a seat, sir. Paper, sir? *Lloyd's*, sir? *Reynolds'*, sir? Yes, sir.' . . .

"I had begun to look around me. I found I had stumbled on just what I had determined to make a hunt for. I was in one of the greenbaize-curtained boxes into which Mr. Pickwick was always dropping under the guidance of Sam Weller, whose 'knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar.' Unless you have a Sam Weller at your elbow you will not very easily find the Cheshire Cheese, the last of the London chop-houses, even though it is in Baedeker. In the opposite corner was, not Mr. Pickwick, but one of those respectable shabby old gentlemen you never see outside of London. The waiter asked him in the same confidential tone, 'if he would not have a half-bitter; if he would not like to see yesterday's *Times*? A most interestin' article in it, sir, Mr. Price, sir.' Then Mr. Price's half-bitter came in a dented old pewter pot, and along with it an exaggerated wine-glass; and Mr. Price held the pewter in the air, and a softly murmuring stream flowed from the one into the other. Beyond the box I was in I saw other hard straight-backed seats, and between them other most beautifully clean, white cloth-covered tables, at all of which were three or four rather quiet and sedate, but after their manner sociable, English-

men, everybody seeming to know everybody else in the place. Everything seemed happy, even to the cat purring on the hearth, and the brass kettle singing on the hob. Perhaps I should except the restless waiter, who, when anyone came in, rushed to the bottom of the stairs and gave his unearthly yell. Soon down the same stairs came the translation of the yell in the shape of the steak I had ordered, and with it the potatoes in their jackets, all on old blue willow-ware plates (see illustration, p. 67).

"'Your steak, sir. Yes, sir. Anything else, sir? Napkin, sir? Oh, serviette! Yes, sir. All Americans like them, sir.'

"And so I found for the first time that napkins and bread, freely bestowed in decent restaurants at home, are in England looked upon as costly luxuries.

"The old gentleman by this time was ready to go. 'Mac!' he called.

"'Yes, sir. Chops, potatoes, and bread, sixteen pence, sir. Anything to drink? Half-bitter, sir? One-and-seven, sir.'

"'Make it one-and-nine, Mac.'

"'Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Morning, sir.'

"I wondered what he meant by making it one-and-nine. But shortly after it was my turn, and something like this went on.

"'Steak, potatoes, and bread, sixteen pence, sir. One-and-six, sir.'

"'But I had no bread.'

"'No bread, sir? Right, sir. One-and-eight, sir. Two-shilling piece, sir? Right, sir. Morning, sir.'

Then a fearful gloom fell on his countenance. As I walked towards the door where the other waiter was standing he announced, in a voice so loud that

the 'Ullomullum de loodle wumblejum' being shouted up the stairs was nothing to it, and everyone stopped reading and looked up: 'James, the gentleman hasn't given me anythink, but he desires to give you somethink.' Then I understood what to make it one-and-nine meant. I felt in my pocket. I had but a shilling, but I put it in his hand and ran, followed by the roar that only happy and pleased Englishmen can give.

"Although my first experience ended so disastrously, financially and every other way, I have returned again and again to the Cheshire Cheese, and have, moreover, tried to induce others to go there with me. For if the place is not haunted, as it is said to be, by the shades of Ben Jonson and Herrick, of Samuel Johnson and Boswell, the waiter is perfectly willing, for a consideration, to point out to you the stains of their wigs on the wall. It is certain that Dickens, Forster, Tom Hood, Wilkie Collins, and many other worthies did frequent it, while Sala periodically puffs it, and a host of other lights have written about it. In my own small way I have endeavoured to lead some modern junior novelists and poets there, to show them how near they could come to some of the great masters whom they apparently worship so thoroughly. But on the only occasion when I succeeded in placing one probably in the seat of Goldsmith or Herrick, he sniffed at the chops and remarked that if Johnson had had a napkin it would have been better for his personal appearance.

"I hardly know myself what is the attraction of the place, for you can only get chops and steaks, kidneys and sausages, or on Saturdays a gigantic pudding, to eat your money's worth of which you

must have the appetite of a Gargantua, or, on Shrove Tuesdays, pancakes. If you should happen to want anything else, you would probably get the answer which Mr. Sala says was given to a friend of his who asked (at the Cock) for a hard-boiled egg with his salad: 'A hegg! If Halbert Hedward 'imself wuz to cum 'ere he couldn't 'ave a hegg.' Whoever really cares to see the last of the Old London chop-houses, let him, when next in London, look up the sign of YE OLDE CHESHYRE CHEESE."

The story told by Mr. Pennell of the rapacity of the waiter is probably to be considered as an outburst of American humour, at least it should be taken *cum grano*. The lightning calculator has been popularly located in many a house of public resort; he is legion as well as legendary. "Twenty-five years ago I know," says "W. M." in the *Realm*, "he flourished at Evans's Supper Rooms in the good old days of Paddy Green and the boy glee-singers, with their Eton jackets and shiny faces. 'John'—so, I think, he was called—stood near the exit and took our money as we went out. Mr. W. S. Gilbert was an occasional visitor to the rooms, and he objected very much to John's peculiar system of arithmetic, and determined to punish him in the matter of tips. One evening on leaving the place his bill amounted to half a crown. This he gave to the 'lightning calculator,' handing him at the same time a single penny by way of *pourboire*. With a polite bow and a deprecating smile, John handed back the insufficient copper, saying, in his most considerate tone, '*Perhaps, sir, you may be going over a bridge!*' At that time there was a toll for crossing Waterloo Bridge, which rendered the force of the sarcasm

WILLIAM'S ROOM IN THE DISTANCE

additionally unpleasant. The story was told me by poor William Brunton, the artist, who said he was present on the occasion."

This story has no connection with the "Cheese," but it may be read as a footnote to Mr. Pennell's history, and it is quite possible, now that Evans's has gone the way that all mundane things eventually go, that some ingenious individual may endeavour to father the sarcasm on a waiter of the "Cheese"; but let us hope that this veracious anecdote will prevent such an attempt, for no one acquainted with the place could suppose that, however ready "Cheese" waiters may be as reckoners, they would descend to add insult to imposition.

CHAPTER IV

AN ENGLISH LADY'S DESCRIPTION

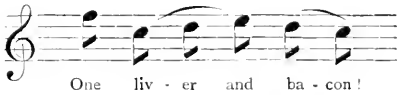
A tavern is the busy man's recreation, the idle man's business, the melancholy man's sanctuary, the stranger's welcome, the inn's-of-court man's entertainment, the scholar's kindness, and the citizen's courtesy.—BISHOP EARLE.

MR. PENNELL, as a visitor from across the herring-pond, has been here allowed priority in giving what the French call his appreciations. Now we may hear what an English lady has to say.

In the meantime, although the scene remains the same, the former actors have left the stage. The subtle arithmetician "Mac" gave place to the less voluble and preciser Coles, and he again, after some ten years of service, has earned his *otium cum dignitate*. His successor, Worth—a most worthy successor—will probably in another quarter of a century retire a millionaire. All "Cheese" waiters become millionaires—that has been the order up till now. But "our little systems have their day, they have their day and

cease to be." The "Cheese," averse from change as it may be, has no longer any otherum botherum mashes on order, eggs are no longer taboo, dishes then unknown to Mr. Pennell have been added, table napkins are acclimatised, the English tongue is so spoken as to be even understanded of an American, and gravity presides where levity used to reign.

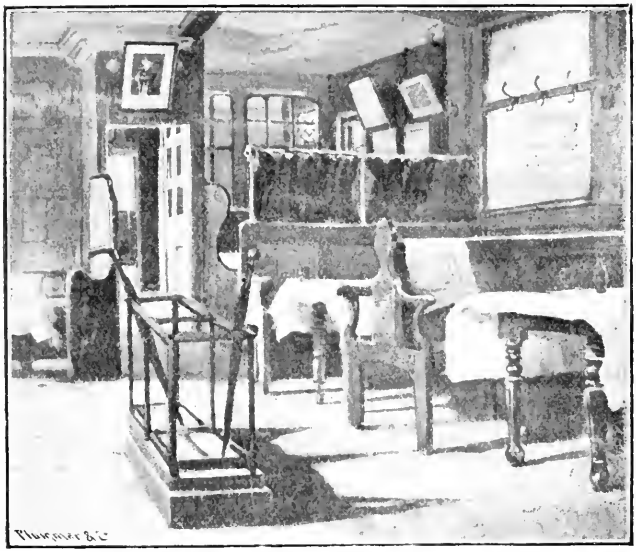
True, the orders have still to be called upstairs to the kitchen, but the tone has changed, and the cacophonous shout is replaced by something like the following, which was taken down by a professor of the Guildhall School of Music as it was sung up the stair by the unconscious head-waiter :—



Turning from the stair this melodious songster, his visage clad in wreathed smiles, is ready to receive the visitors about to be introduced, ay, prepared to anticipate their every wish. But the "English lady"? I do not know whether I ought not to beg her pardon for giving precedence to the evidence of a gentleman, but she doubtless will remember that the orators of the politest nation in the world always address their mixed audiences as "Messieurs et Mesdames," and will forgive me, as she probably forgives a scientific member of the House of Lords, who adopts the French fashion of placing the Lords of Creation in their duly pre-eminent positions. In the *World* of August 31, 1892, "Ina," who will be generally recognised as the brilliant Lady Colin Campbell, writes :—

"It is August, London is empty, and we are bored; yet dine we must somewhere, and where to go is the difficulty. Everybody one knows is either at Homburg or Cowes, so we cannot possibly go to the Savoy or the Amphitryon. There is nothing more utterly stupid than to visit the haunts of society after society has left, and to find them peopled by the unknown—good creatures in their way, no doubt, but not exactly *des nôtres*; not fashionably dressed enough to admire, nor ridiculously dressed enough to be amusing, and the affairs of whom we cannot discuss, for the simple reason that we know nothing about them, good, bad, or indifferent. How strange it is to think that only a short time ago no lady would ever have dreamed of dining at a London restaurant! Then a few somewhat fast people set the fashion of supping at some public place instead of their own homes; and now there is probably no inhabitant of Mayfair or Belgravia, with any pretensions to smartness, who has not at some time or other either dined or supped at one of the many fashionable cafés which have sprung up in various parts of the town, and have become for a time the rage, only to be displaced by some newer, more pretentious, and more expensive restaurant, to which people flock, quite as much to see and discuss each other as they do to discuss the delicacies provided for them by the latest celebrated *chef* imported direct from Paris. But, as I said before, dine we must somewhere; and dining at a restaurant being depressing, and dining at home dull, we are just turning over in our minds what we had best do under the circumstances, when there comes a loud peal at the front door bell. We all start up, and"—and, to abridge Lady Colin's

narrative, three ladies and three gentlemen find themselves in Fleet Street "in front of a little narrow alley, suggestive (to me) of robbery and murder. Here we alight, and, with many apologies for the shabbiness of the entrance, our host conducts us—by the back way by mistake—into a dining place. A



WHERE "INA" SAT WITH HER FRIENDS

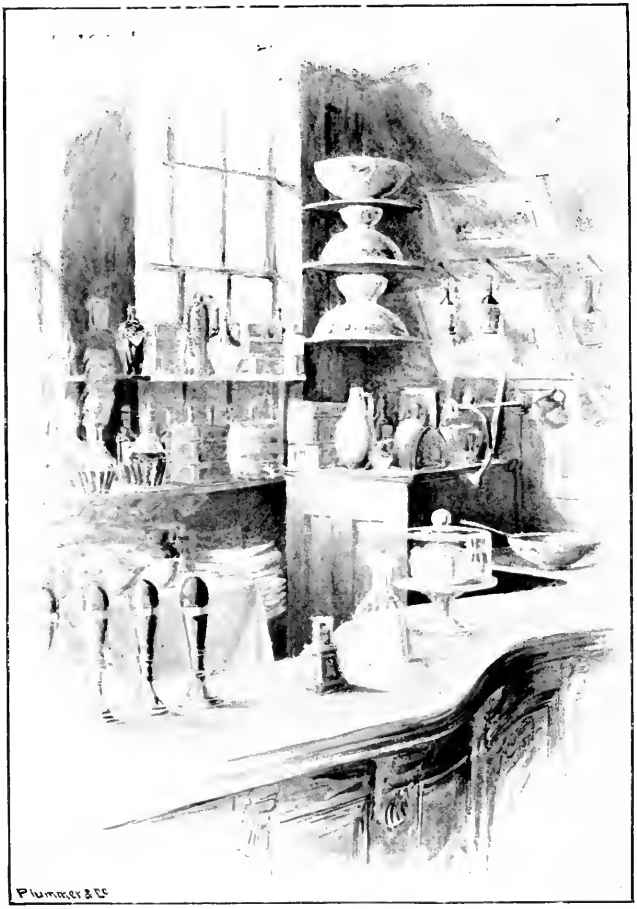
flare of unshaded gas lights up a small, old-fashioned room, the floor of which is covered with sawdust. The ceiling is white, with projecting cross-beams, and at one side of the room is a long oak table, at which Johnson, Goldsmith, and a few other choice spirits, were wont to sit and feed; and here, it is said, origi-

nated the well-known riddle about the number of beefsteaks it would take to reach the moon. All along one side of the room are wooden partitions, exactly like old-fashioned pews, with hard, cushionless seats. One of our party says, as she sits down, that she feels as if she were in church; we devoutly wished she would *behave* a little more as though she were there, long before the evening was over; but reaction having set in, we are all, I fear, in a terribly frivolous humour, not by any means in keeping with the solemn respectability of our surroundings, for we are told that this chop-house has been in existence ever since the year 1667, and is no ephemeral mushroom-house of the hour, to be sought out one day and forgotten the next. There is also an old-fashioned, not to say antediluvian, air about the other diners quite in keeping with the antiquity of the place, and I fear they must be not a little shocked at our light jests and trivial conversation, carried on in no modulated tone of voice. Our pew just holds six comfortably, and we sit down three and three, opposite each other, on either side of a very narrow table covered with a spotless white cloth. We have willow-pattern plates, large and hot for the meat, and small and cold, each with a pat of butter on it, for our potatoes. First, we have thick slices of hot ham, the lean tender and pink and the fat succulent, with an immense dish of the most delicious peas I ever ate, and young potatoes served in their jackets. Anyone who has tasted a fresh-run salmon which has been green-kippered, and has compared it with the hard, salt fish that is cured for the London market, will appreciate the difference between an ordinary ham and one that is prepared for immediate consumption. These Yorkshire were

not intended for keeping, and, as the cook afterwards informed us, were all eaten up in a day. I could easily have believed her if she had said one was eaten up at every meal, judging by the thickness of the slices to which we were helped, and the amount we were supposed to eat of them. The next dish is a point steak, rosy without being *saignant*, accompanied by fresh dishes of young peas and potatoes.

"I was by this time beginning to feel thoroughly uncomfortable, owing to the want of some sort of stuffing to my seat, and I leaned first on one elbow, then on the other, then back against the hard wood, then upright again; but all in vain, for no change of position gave me even momentary relief, and I longed to get one of the evening papers, of which there was a plentiful supply hanging over the back of the pews, and to fill it with the shavings out of the grate, roll it up into a cushion, and sit upon it. Anyone, unless they have spent their lives in a velvet arm-chair, as I have, might think me fanciful; but I can assure them I was quite miserable, and could not even get through my 'buck rabbit.' At last I appealed to our host, and asked him if he could not get me a cushion; upon which he in turn appealed to the waiter, and never shall I forget the waiter's expression, and never did I feel more completely snubbed than when he answered slowly and solemnly, without a smile on his pallid face, 'Sir, this is the "Olde Cheshire Cheese."' He said not another word, and though we did not exactly understand the connection between the cushion and the Cheshire Cheese, a subdued silence fell upon us all, as we turned over his meaning in our minds; and we felt a little small, as one does when one cannot see the point of some clever joke.

"After the remains of the buck rabbits have been removed, our somewhat eccentric dinner is brought to a close by a bowl of rum punch, accompanied by six long churchwarden pipes and a glass full of bird's-eye tobacco. We wonder if the ladies who usually dine at 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese' are in the habit of finishing off their meal with a pipe; but unfortunately have no means of ascertaining what is the correct thing to do, as the only other female in the place is dining behind a curtain in the far corner of the room. I own to having been tempted into trying some umber-scented cigarettes which were brought me specially from Algiers; but I am not an habitual smoker, and am bound to confess I would have much preferred to suck bon-bons, or even to eat ripe greengages, than to fill my mouth with nasty tobacco smoke. Still there is always something very fascinating about a long white pipe, it looks so clean-limbed and nice; and I turn over in my mind whether I dare ask the waiter for some soap-and-water for the more obvious purpose of blowing bubbles with it. I am afraid, however, to venture after our late snubbing over the cushion, and it is just possible also that the other occupiers of the room might object to having soap-bubbles floating about over their heads and bursting in their eyes; so after mature deliberation, I decide that by far the best use to make of my pipe is to drink my punch through it."



FIRST VIEW OF THE BAR

CHAPTER V

ABOUT THE PUDDING

Now, good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both.—SHAKESPEARE.

"HOW do you make it?" asked a fair American of the proprietor, with the amiable curiosity we somehow expect in our Transatlantic cousins.

The answer is not recorded, for in the manner of making chiefly lies the specialty of the Old Cheshire Cheese. The hand of the proprietor himself compounds the ingredients in a secret room, secure from the gaze of even his most inquisitive attendants.

Yet when we look on the immense bowl from which sixty or seventy people are to be fed, one cannot wonder at the lady's desire to know how such a Brobdingnagian dish could be so exquisitely prepared.

The proportions of the bowl are emblematic of the profusion in which its contents are dispensed, and the edacity of a veritable Gargantua would find itself vanquished in presence of the "Cheese" hospitality.

Hunger flies affrighted from the board, and no guest ever had occasion to murmur as the writer had at a popular dining-place, when, at the conclusion of his lunch, he handed to the manager this impromptu parody:

> To lunch with —— is all the art I know,
> To make men hungry—and to keep them so.

The tendency at the "Cheese" is all the other way. Soft purrings of delight take the place of the angry growls of the disappointed. It is not a question with how little you can be put off; it is a point of honour to induce you to consume pudding to the very limit of human capacity.

Old "William," for many years the head-waiter, could only be seen in his real glory on Pudding Days. He used to consider it his duty to go round the tables insisting that the guests should have second or third, ay, and with wonder be it spoken, fourth helpings.

"Any gentleman say pudden?" was his constant query; and his habit was not broken when a crusty customer growled:

"No *gentleman* says pudden."

William either never saw the point or, with that greatness of soul which lends indifference to the true waiter, disdained to make reply or essay amendment. William, like many of his customers, has passed away, but a room is consecrated to his memory and called by his name. And if the saying of "pudden" is now less frequent, the eating still proceeds apace. Much has been said and sung in its praise. It has been apotheosised and eaten. Delightful simplicity of worship!

BAR—WAY OUT

A complete anthology of the laudatory prose and verse would surpass all modest bounds, would, in fact, run to seed, and will not here be attempted. A restrictive policy must therefore be adopted, and the reader asked to judge of the mass by the samples.

In "Ye Lay of Ye Lost Minstrel," printed in the *West London Observer* (April 1890), are a number of lightly skipping verses all in praise of the "Cheese," but too long to quote. The author, Mr. William Henderson, knows his "Cheese," and we present a sample of his style:

If you'd dine at your ease
Try "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese."
At this famous resort
In the Wine Office Court
Kickshaws, entrées or slops
You'll not get, but the chops,
Devil'd kidneys and steaks,
He will say who partakes
Are all second to none—
To a turn they are done!
But the pudding!—oh my!
You look on with a sigh,
As it comes piping hot
From the caldron or pot,—
Oh the savour, the taste,
Of its lining, its paste!
How it wells! how it swells!
In its bosom there dwells
Food for gods, meat for men,
Who resort to Moore's den.

In a parody appropriate to the sentiments of those who scorn the foreign yoke, Mr. Henderson gives us the following song, inscribed to Beaufoy A. Moore, and published by Mr. J. H. Wadsworth, of Boston (U.S.A.), who also provides the accompaniment.

Ye Pudding's Requiem.

RECIT. *Larghetto.*

We sought "The Cheese," With thirst and hun - ger

f

prest, And own we love the Pud-ding Day the best. But no one

quarrels With the chops cook'd here, Or steaks, when wash'd down

ARIA. *mf*

by Old Eng - lish beer!

1. 'Twas
2. And

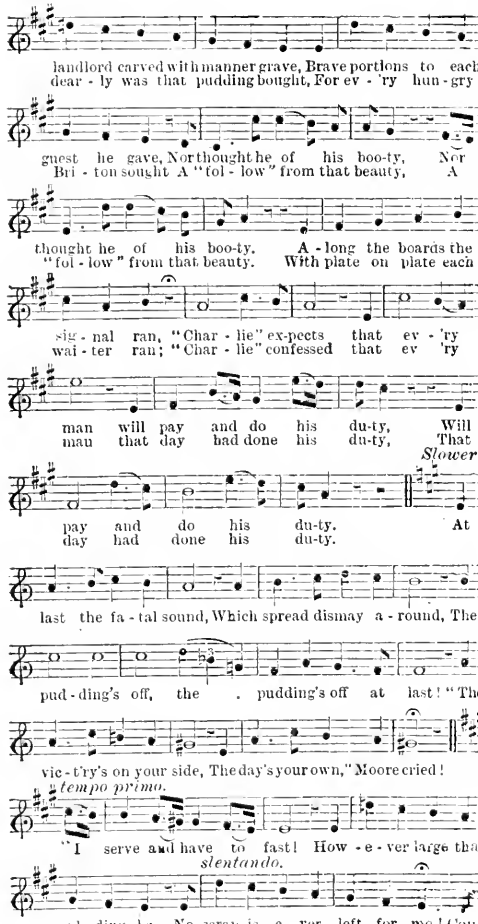
on Saint An-drew's day, Our way thro' Fleet Street
now the wai - ters pour prime "Burton" foam -ing

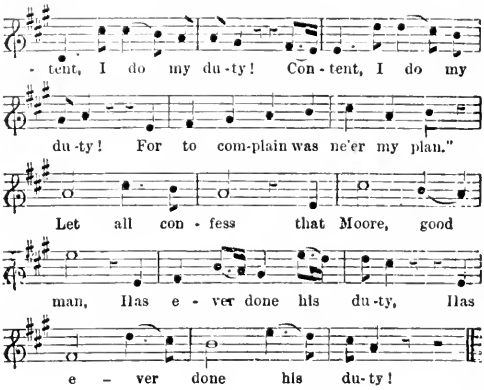
f

lay; We sniff'd the pud - ding then! We
o'er "Old Wil - liam" marks his prey! No

scorn'd all fo - reign fare, True Bri - tish food was
tips that wai - ter claimed, Long be that wai - ter

there, To "cut and come a - gen." Our
faded, Who smiles and makes it pay! Not


landlord carved with manner grave, Brave portions to each
dear - ly was that pudding bought, For ev - 'ry hun - gry
guest he gave, Nor thought he of his boo-ty, Nor
Bri - ton sought A "fol - low" from that beauty, A
thought he of his boo-ty. A - long the boards the
"fol - low" from that beauty. With plate on plate each
sig - nal ran, "Char - lie" ex-pects that ev - 'ry
wai - ter ran; "Char - lie" confessed that ev 'ry
man will pay and do his du-ty, Will
man that day had done his du-ty, That
Slower.
pay and do his du-ty. At
day had done his du-ty.
last the fa - tal sound, Which spread dismay a - round, The
pud - ding's off, the . pudding's off at last! "The
vic - t'ry's on your side, The day's your own," Moore cried!
tempo primo.
"I serve and have to fast! How - e - ver large that
slentando.
pud - ding be, No scrap is e - ver left for me! Con-



1890. W. H.

The "Cheese" pudding is not restricted in its sphere of influence. Hundreds are sent out every year to all parts of London, and, indeed, England. Some even have found their way to the United States, imported direct from "The Cheese" by enthusiastic Americans. The following extract from the *Court Journal* of April 4, 1891, describes the misadventures of one owing to the operation of the McKinley Act: "The London lark pudding is renowned in many lands. The travelled American speaks with rapture of that lark pudding he partook of in Fleet Street. Mr. Burras, of New York, requested that such a lark pudding should be sent out to him from London, so that the stay-at-home ones might partake of the British culinary luxury. The delicacy duly arrived; the guests who were to aid Mr. Burras in eating it were duly invited—all was ready, indeed, when an unexpected difficulty arose. The Customs House

authorities declined to give it up until the question as to what duty 'lark pudding' was liable to was settled. The McKinley Bill does not mention lark pudding. It takes cognisance of canned goods and potted meats, certainly; but larks in a pudding were unclassified, and they said it did not come under the head of manufactured articles, because it was food in a natural state. A week has elapsed while the authorities have been debating the point, and in the meantime the lark pudding is most probably turning sour, and Mr. Burras and his friends dancing with indignation. More trouble will ensue over this lark pudding, no doubt, than did upon the opening of the four-and-twenty-blackbird pie of yore! It may cause the establishment of Free Trade in the States."

It is satisfactory to be able to state that the pudding eventually passed the Customs House none the worse for its detention. The guests were eloquent in its praise, and several of them have since visited England merely to track the pudding to the place of its nativity.

CHAPTER VI

CALLED TO THE BAR

If on thy theme I rightly think,
There are five reasons why men drink :
Good wine, a friend, because I'm dry,
At least, I should be by-and-bye,
Or any other reason why.—H. ALDRICH.

ABOUT ten o'clock one sharp frosty morning, many years ago, a short yet pleasant dialogue took place—probably many such had taken place—between old friends in Fleet Street.

"Tam, is it too early to have a drink?"

"Yes, decidedly!—and besides, I have just had twa."

An adjournment was incontinently made to the Cheshire Cheese. I was invited to accompany my seniors, and the first editor of this "Book of the Cheese" introduced his present unworthy successor to that mysterious and subdued corner of the journalistic paradise. From the "Cheese" point of view it was still early morn, and little was stirring except the hot whisky with lemon and sugar which was to constitute

the libation to the local goddess who dispenses eternal youth. Like Dr. Johnson in his later years, I, in these later days, am abstinent from alcoholic beverages; and, more fortunate than he, am not obliged to destroy my nerves with unlimited tidal waves of tea. Why? Because to-day we drink Schweppe's. And that is my drink. Some people have been known to mix it with Cheshire Cheese whisky. But modestly, discreetly, and solemnly was I called to the Bar. Such is the fascination of the place that the call has resounded through my being ever since. I have responded to it for years, and respond to it now. Come, therefore, with me into the bar. At page 43 is depicted the scene which, as you enter, meets your yearning eyes.

"The bar of the 'Cheese' is unique amongst the bowers of Boniface in the metropolis. It has no equal and no rival. Here," says the *Sportsman* of March 30, 1887, "gather poets, painters, lawyers, barristers, preachers, journalists, stockbrokers, musicians, town councillors, and vestrymen, with just a *soupçon* of sporting celebrities, and a decided dash of the impecunious 'Have beens.' The latter represent in the 'Cheese' colony the Irish division in Parliament. Many of our most eminent journalists, legal luminaries, and successful merchants have been patrons of the Old Cheshire Cheese in the days when it was to them club, discussion forum, and even home."

The "Cheese" bar is like unto no other in this wide wilderness of London. The customers are unique, and the names of their drinks are peculiar. The simplest and amplest is "whisky," and that means Scotch whisky. No old customer of the "Cheese" would ever

think of asking for "Scotch." If anyone dares to say "Scotch," he is marked down at once as one not yet inured to the ways of the bar. On the other hand, neither must he whisper "Irish"—certainly not! If he knows his "Cheese" he asks for "Cork," and if he says "Irish" he is an ignoramus. Then who would mention "gin?" The word is absolutely vulgar, and should be confined to the East End and Mrs. Harris. No, no! the cognoscente calls for "rack"—a funny name, which may symbolise the position of the drinker on the morrow, or it may be a mere contraction of arrack. Who shall say, or who cares?

Punch, a mysterious and delectable compound, we had better not order in the bar, its consumption is so much more pleasant up aloft; but there is no reason why we should not admire the punch bowls, and having gloated over them, and studied the portrait of an erewhile waiter over the fireplace as much as they deserve, we probably turn about, and, as the eyes become accustomed to the darkness, find ourselves confronted with this other view (p. 45). This shows you the way out. But don't go for a while. You would probably like to see somebody in the bar. So far as this book is concerned, there is no living thing to be seen in the vicinity except a cat, and that wise animal, as the illustration on p. 10 proves, prefers to remain in the passage.

What explanation can be given for depicting as a dreary solitude one of the places which every day contains more human beings to the square yard than any other space on the habitable globe? Do you think the explanation difficult? Not at all. The artist called daily for a week, seeking a chance to unfold his portfolio. Room was found for him, but,

alas! the crowd made it impossible for him to open the sketch-book. Thus the bar had to arrange to give him a special sitting in the middle of the night, when nobody but the cat was on the watch. This explanation, it will be admitted, is as clear as the bar.

Adequately to people the bar would task the pencil of a Hogarth. That more genial Hogarth of our time, Phil May, has done it passing well in his inimitable "Parson and the Painter," but, unfortunately, his sketches are not available for the purposes of this book. Allow me, in default, to refer to one or two celebrities.

I brought you here, gentle reader, in the morning when the evening paper editors and sub-editors flock in after having finished their morning editions (in the topsy-turvydom of London, the evening papers begin publishing two hours before noon), but as further work is before them, their matutinal visits are short, and their orders urgent.

If it be winter time, the old-fashioned mullers of stout copper, and cone-shaped, like a Welsh-woman's hat, are called into requisition to make hot ale or mulled claret, two delicious beverages prepared by the manageress with sugar and the spices of Araby the Blest in a way that it were vain to seek elsewhere. A longing glance at the punch bowls—it is too early to fill or empty them—a slap at a political foe, and the morning-evening journalists depart.

When the shades of even begin to fall, the blinds are drawn, the gas is lighted, and the full orchestra tunes up. The Cheesecites are in their glory, and what might be copy for a dozen comic papers elicits a little passing laughter and vanishes into oblivion.

When the sparkle has fled from the champagne, who can restore it? A fresh bottle must be drawn, and to enjoy it during effervescence one must be present at the uncorking. Let me try, however, in a dull way, to give some typical conversation.

The bar is crowded, and floating in the ambient air one detects the rich voice of a Scotch poet who is being taken to task for his grammar.

"It's maybe not English at present, Mr. Bluggs; but wha maks your English? It's your Shakespeares, your Multons, an *Me!*"

From another part of the room come the tones of an Englishman sadly hurtled by various Irish and Scotch discoursers.

"Of course the Scotch say they speak better English than the English. I remember I once had a short engagement on an Edinburgh paper. When about to leave 'Auld Reekie' there was a little *deoch-an-dorus*, and some fifteen of the fellows came to wish me God-speed. They were from some fifteen different parts of Scotland, and after certain formalities in the way of hot toddy my Scotch friends brought up the eternal question of their immaculate English. 'It may be as you say,' I interposed, 'but why do you speak it with fifteen different accents?' Had them there, ha! ha!"

Irish Dramatist (discussing tours, &c.)—"Did I hear you say Stoney Stratford? I was once there, and no wonder they called it Stoney Stratford, for I was never so bitten with bugs in my life."[1]

Genial Advertising Manager—"I hear that poor

[1] This delightful *non sequitur* has already appeared in print. I give it as it actually sprang from the mouth of my Hibernian friend, who failed to understand the roar that followed.

old Mac's dead" (general sorrow and display of handkerchiefs). (Enter poor old Mac—silence falls on the company.)

Poor old Mac—"Good evening, Miss S——, I haven't seen you for a long time."

Miss S.—"Was it very hot where you have come from?"

Funny Man—"Why, Jack, you seem to believe in a lot of things nobody else believes in"—(then, as a clincher)—"I suppose you believe in the transmigration of souls!"

Solemn Man—"I do—and so do you. You must feel you were an ass when you lent me that half-sovereign six months ago."

Socialistic Journalist (to admiring friends)—"Have you read my articles in the *X Y Gazette*? No? Well, read them, and you will see that I am the second, if not the first, among the teachers of humanity. Nobody, for at least eighteen hundred years, has taught as I have taught."

Waiter, suddenly entering the bar—"Oh, I beg your pardon, but you did not pay for that steak you had in the room."

Socialistic Journalist—"Pay for it! Not likely! It was from the beginning as much my steak as Charlie Moore's. Now it is more mine than his. Pay? Base is the slave that pays."

Racing Journalist—"Jones is a good writer, but he will never set the Thames on fire."

Impecunious Reporter—"I wish he would, for it's very cold, and I have to sleep on the Embankment."

The story goes that on one occasion there was some little misunderstanding at the bar; but mis-

understandings are of the rarest, and this one has become legendary. The account which reached me ran something after this manner:—

Great Sub-Editor (with back to fire)—"*You're* not a freemason."

Great Reporter—"I am."

G. S.-E.—"Why, I've been making masonic signs to you for the last half-hour."

G. R.—"Do you call me a ——?"

G. S.-E.—"I do."

G. R.—"Then ——" (and they roll together on the floor).

Head waiter (rushing in)—"What's this? What's this about?"

Manageress—"Only two gentlemen making a few masonic signs under the table."

Of course, as a rule, harmony prevails in the "Cheese," and "chaff" abounds without physical threshing, for the *habitués* love the "Cheese" and themselves too much to make the place a bear-garden. Dr. Johnson has left us the tradition of merciless blows, but they were blows in wordy strife in the argument for victory when, as Boswell says, the Doctor, if his pistol missed fire, knocked his opponent down with the butt-end. There are still plenty of butt-end blows given, but the rule is to find a pleasant flow of soul. The "Cheese" is a second home for the Cheesemite, and one does not desecrate his own hearth.

To quote again from the *Sportsman*:—

"There is a sense of comfort and veneration about the place which constitutes an absolute charm. There is something homely and out of the common in its sawdust-coated floors, with uneven boards and great gaping 'chinks'—those convenient receptacles

for rolling coins, the perquisites of the cellarman and future generations of builders' labourers. The fire-places are huge and commodious, capable of holding a hundredweight of coal at a time. These said fire-places, by the way, have much to answer for in legions of broken resolutions to be home at six. On a cold winter's day, when their genial warmth penetrates every portion of the room, and the merry flames dance and leap after each other up the capacious chimney space, a man listens to the howling wind without, or hears the rain pattering on the paved courts, and he says, says he, 'The old woman may be cross, or the mater may scold; but we don't kill a sheep every day, and—just one more, James, and I will catch the seven.' Those wicked fire-places, the huge singing kettle, the cosy recesses, and the seductive perfume of toddy have indeed much to answer for. Like Tam o' Shanter, the patrons of the inn think not of the long miles and the party who is

> Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
> Nursing her wrath to keep it warm."

Perforce we must tear ourselves away, for other matter merits our concern.

CHAPTER VII

CLUB LIFE AT THE "CHEESE"

The feast of reason and the flow of soul.—POPE.

ONE of the most interesting features of the "Cheese" is its warm and full-blooded club life. It is not the stately and withal solemn life of the modern West-end club, but it is the social and intensely human life of the club as Johnson, Burke, Reynolds understood it. When the Doctor, Sir Joshua, and some others established "The Club" in 1764, the members were to meet once a month and take supper, display their wit, and pass their evening in the sympathetic flow of soul.

At the "Old Cheshire Cheese" the Johnsonian tradition is naturally strong; it pervades the whole place, and all the clubs which hold their regular or occasional meetings there endeavour, as much as our less heroic days will allow, to emulate the example of the giants of the days gone by.

Here the spirit of the last century lurks not in dim and solitary nooks, but stalks abroad even at noon-day before the face of all men. Yet it is when the

shades of night have fallen on Fleet Street that the invocation of the past is most successful, and the full flavour and fragrance of the old-time spirit are enhanced at the call of a more modern though still mature and mellow brother. Then, when the big fire blazes in the mighty grate, and the happy kettle croons to itself on the hob, when the blinds are down and the gas or the candles alight—for we still affect candles at the "Cheese"—then is the witching hour when fellow opens his heart to fellow, and the room resounds with merry quips and cranks, happy turns of thought and pleasant mirth.

Informal clubs, amorphous, ever-changing coteries of everyday acquaintances, are to be seen nightly at the "Cheese"; but the other sort, organised, developed, and vertebrate, only appear in their proper season.

The first of these is, of course:

THE JOHNSON CLUB.

A club composed of many men eminent in literature and art, or distinguished in other ways. The club is restricted to thirty-one members, who bind themselves to sup together annually on or about December 13, the anniversary of the Doctor's death, but various other meetings are held throughout the year. The nature of the club may be best described here in the words of Dr. George Birkbeck Hill, the well-known editor of the latest and best edition of "Boswell." "We are," he says (in the *Atlantic Monthly* of January 1896), "in strict accordance with the great lexicographer's definition, 'an assembly of good fellows meeting under certain conditions'; the conditions being that we shall do honour to the

immortal memory of Dr. Samuel Johnson by supping together four times a year, and by swallowing as much beef-steak pudding, punch, and tobacco smoke as the strength of each man's constitution admits. A few of the weaker brethren—among whom unhappily I am included—whose bodily infirmity cannot respond to the cheerful Johnsonian cry, 'Who's for poonsh?' do their best to play their part by occasionally reading essays on Johnsonian subjects, and by seasoning their talk with anecdotes and sayings of the great Doctor. We are tolerated by the jovial crew, for they see that we mean well, and are as 'clubbable' as nature allows. OUR FAVOURITE HAUNT IS THE OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE, THE ONLY TAVERN IN FLEET STREET LEFT UNCHANGED by what Johnson called that 'fury of innovation' which, beginning with Tyburn and its gallows-tree, has gradually transformed London. The Mitre—'where he loved to sit up late'; where he made Boswell's head ache, not with the port wine, but with the sense he put into it; where, at their first supper, he called to him with warmth, 'Give me your hand, I have taken a liking to you'; where, nearly a century later, Hawthorne, in memory of the two men, dined 'in the low, sombre coffee-room'—the Mitre has been rebuilt.

"The Cock, most ancient of taverns, has followed its 'plump head-waiter' along the road of mortality, although, fortunately, its fittings and furniture are still preserved with the house which, under the same name, has risen on the other side of the street. THE OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE STANDS AS IT STOOD IN THE DAYS WHEN GOLDSMITH USED TO PASS ITS SIDE DOOR on his way up the dark entry to his

lodgings in Wine Office Court. The jolly host who owns the freehold can show title-deeds going back almost to the time of the Great Fire of London.

"There, on the ground floor, we meet our 'Prior' sitting on a bench, above which is set in the wall a brass tablet bearing the following inscription:—

"'THE FAVOURITE SEAT OF
DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON.

Born September 18, 1709; *Died December* 13, 1784.

"'In him a noble understanding and a masterly intellect were united to great independence of character and unfailing goodness of heart, which won the admiration of his own age, and remain as recommendations to the reverence of posterity.

"'No, sir! there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness has been produced as by a good tavern.—JOHNSON.'

"In this same room, with its floor as 'nicely sanded' as when Goldsmith knew it, our club gathers from time to time; here, undisturbed in our thoughts by a single modern innovation except the gas, we sup on one of those beef-steak puddings for which the Cheshire Cheese has been famous from time immemorial. So vast is it in all its glorious rotundity that it has to be wheeled in on a table; it disdains a successor in the same line, and itself alone satisfies forty hungry guests. 'A magnificent hot apple pie stuck with bay leaves,' our second course, recalls the supper with which Johnson 'celebrated the birth of the first literary child of Mrs. Lennox, the novelist, when at five in the morning his face still shone with meridian splendour though his drink had been only lemonade.'[1] The talk

[1] "The supper was elegant. Johnson had directed that a magnificent hot apple-pie should make part of it, and this he

is of the liveliest; from time to time toasts are drunk and responded to."

The centenary of the death of Dr. Johnson was celebrated in December 1884, and the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* of the 20th of that month thus refers to the Doctor's connection with the ancient hostelry: "Whoever has heard of the grand old Doctor knows well that the greater part of his life was passed between Ludgate Hill and Temple Bar, and that the most interesting portion of it revolved about Gough Square. There seems to be little doubt that while he lived here, the Old Cheshire Cheese tavern was, as is claimed for it, the haunt which he most favoured, and where much of that sledge-hammer wisdom was coaxed forth or teased forth, which Boswell has recorded that, as Macaulay put it, the memory of Johnson might keep alive the fame of his works."

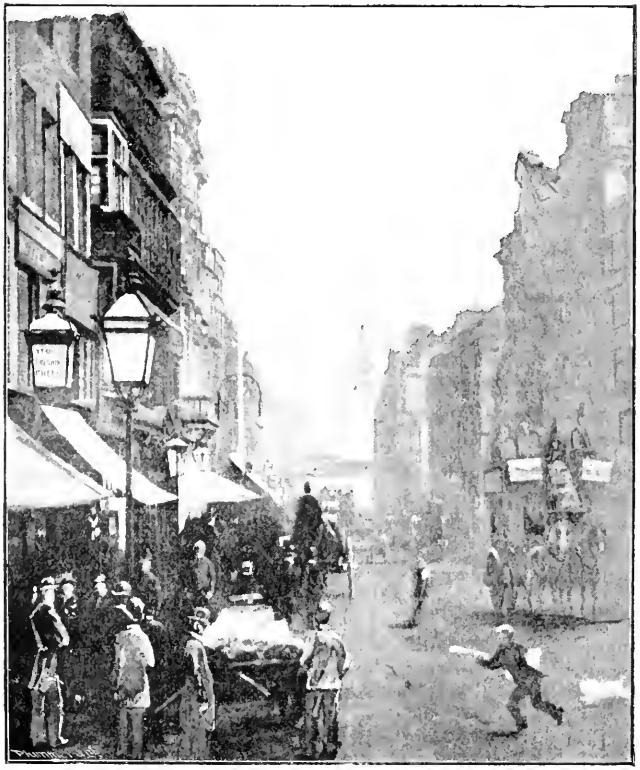
As supplementary to Dr. Birkbeck Hill's description of the club, the following account of an anniversary dinner is extracted from the *City Press* of December 17, 1887:—

"On Tuesday night the members of the Johnson Club, which was founded on December 13, 1884, in honour of the memory of Dr. Samuel Johnson, had their annual dinner in that noted City hostelry, the Old Cheshire Cheese, Wine Office Court. The occasion was the anniversary of the Doctor's death, which

would have stuck with bay leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lennox had written verses, and, further, he had prepared for her a crown of bays with which, but not till he had invoked the Muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows."

The first literary child whose birth was here celebrated was a dreary novel called *The Female Quixote, or the Adventures of Arabella*

the club think they cannot commemorate better than by dining well and heartily, as probably stern old



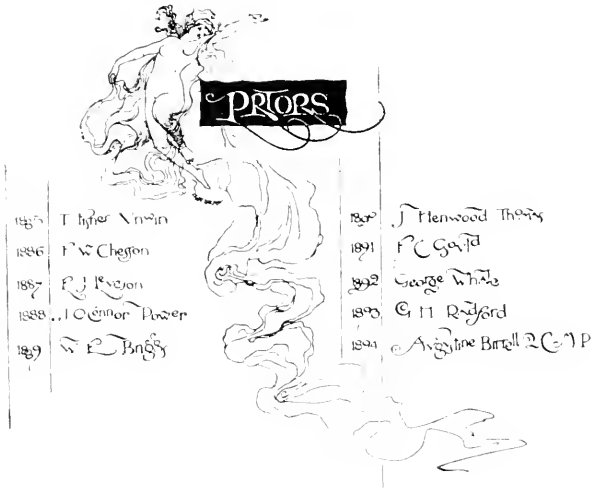
THE CHESHIRE CHEESE—FLEET STREET ENTRANCE

Samuel would have wished. They also pay a compliment to the conservative instincts of the Doctor, by

abjuring the flaring innovation of gas illumination, and eat their dinners solemnly by the light of wax candles. The gloom made apparent by the antiquated lights scarcely served to show the portrait of Dr. Johnson, which was posed on the mantel-shelf, and the frame of which bore the somewhat strange device, 'The glory of a nation are its authors.' The Prior of the club, Mr. O'Connor Power, M.P., occupied the chair, and among those present, hosts and guests, were Sir James Linton, President of the Royal Institute of Water Colour Painters; Dr. Hunter, M.P.; Sir John Thurston, Governor of Fiji; M. Gennadius, Minister for Greece; Mr. Seymour Lucas, A.R.A.; Mr. J. E. Christie, artist; Mr. Havard Thomas, artist; Mr. W. E. Briggs, late M.P. for Blackburn; Mr. Birkbeck Hill, the latest editor of Boswell's immortal Biography, and a numerous gathering of the literary and artistic workers of which the club is mainly composed. The Prior proposed 'The Memory of Dr. Johnson,' and made the customary speech on assuming his new office. The name of Mr. H. M. Stanley, the explorer, as a member of the club, was associated with the toast of 'Absent friends,' and wishes were expressed for the success of his latest heroic expedition."

On page 65 we have a reduced presentment of two pages of the bill of fare of the dinner held on the hundred and tenth anniversary of the Doctor's death (1894). A very beautiful drawing of the stair and bar window formed the frontispiece of the tasteful menu. Another drawing of the stair by the same artist, p. 10, shows the stair in a different aspect.

The chair was occupied by Mr. Augustine Birrell, Q.C., M.P., wittiest of lawyers and law-makers, whose "Obiter Dicta" are in a fair way to be as renowned



Dinner Anniversary Meeting

Thursday December 13th 1894

at the "Old Cheshire Cheese" Wine Office Court.

At Sixteen for Seven

Rump Steak Pudding and Kidneys. Oysters Stewed

Haunch of Venison

Malt Beer and old French Wine

Apple Pie with Cream Stilton Cheese

Drink the Church and the King, and Good Fellowship follow

for their polish and rapier keenness as Johnson's were for bludgeon bluntness. But the *Sketch*, December 19, 1894, which devotes a page and a half to illustration, description, and report, says that "the most interesting figure of the evening was undoubtedly Mr. Dobson. His health was proposed just in such a way as it must have been in the days when men of letters indited odes to one another." Then followed the reading of gentle imitations of Mr. Dobson's style, but exigency of space precludes our quoting more than a couple of stanzas from a delightful perversion of "The Ladies of St. James's":

The Journalists of Fleet Street
  Have precious little cash,
They put their all in papers
  Which swiftly go to smash:
But Publishers, my Publishers,
  Sit twirling of their thumbs
While sweated clerks with ledgers
  Tot up colossal sums.

The Journalists of Fleet Street
  While taking of their ease,
Invoke the frequent tankard
  That haunts the Cheshire Cheese:
But Publishers, my Publishers,
  As epicures enjoy
The wines of Mr. Nicols,
  And soups of the Savoy.

The anniversary supper of the following year (1895)

Atte ye Anciente Hostelrie yclept ✣ Ye ✣ Old ✣ Cheshyre ✣ Cheese

did not produce quite so elaborate a Bill of the Fare, yet it had one feature well worthy of reproduction

here, and with Mr. Joseph Pennell's kind permission we present it to our readers, who will recognise how deftly that charming artist has idealised the old blue willow plate, the pipe, and the pot.

The *Sketch* of December 18, 1895, gives the following report of that year's meeting :—

"The members of the Johnson Club held their winter meeting on December 13, at the Cheshire Cheese. There was a large gathering of members

and guests, including Augustine Birrell, who has just vacated the chair; John Sargeant, the new Prior; H.M. Stanley, the explorer, now M.P. for North Lambeth; E. G. Leveson, the Scribe; L. F. Austin, the sub-Prior; W. A. McArthur, Henwood Thomas, George Whale, Henry Norman, H. W. Massingham, Lionel Johnson, T. Fisher Unwin, Joseph Pennell, A. Spokes, T. Ashton, A. Spalding, G. Hance, G. Green, and Gilbert Burgess. The chief incident of the evening was the

reappearance of Mr. Henwood Thomas, an original member of the club, after an absence of six years, during which he has suffered a painful illness. In response to the toast of his health, proposed by the sub-Prior, Mr. Thomas made a speech afterwards described by Mr. Birrell as the most admirably Johnsonian utterance he had ever heard. In lieu of the usual paper, Mr. Birrell gave a diverting account of the visit of a handful of the brethren to Ashbourne, where they discovered a descendant of Boswell. The Prior proposed the health of the guests, and responses in various keys of awe and deprecation were made by Mr. Ashton and others. Mr. Edward Clodd and Mr. H. B. Wheatley, the editor of 'Pepys,' were elected new members."

For the benefit of readers beyond the seas who may not be quite familiar with our prominent men, it may be remarked that the list of those present as given above includes eminent artists, editors, and special correspondents of great newspapers, and at least one great African explorer, not to speak of the latest editors of the two most wonderful books of their kind in the language, "Pepys" and "Boswell."

THE RHYMERS' CLUB.

Another club which affects the stern, uncushioned comforts of the "Cheese" is known as the Rhymers' Club, and we betray no secret when we give the names of the members, for are they not written in the book of their poetic deeds? In this book, published through Elkin Mathews in 1892, the composition of the club is thus recorded: Ernest Dowson, Edwin J. Ellis, G. A. Greene, Lionel Johnson, Richard Le

Gallienne, Victor Plarr, Ernest Radford, Ernest Rhys, T. W. Rolleston, Arthur Symons, John Todhunter, W. B. Yeats.

When such sweet singers meet, it may well be believed that the night is ambrosial, care and the world are banished, and the contests of the "Cheese" and of the "Mermaid"—in miniature, it is no discourtesy to say—live again, as Mr. Rhys sings:

> As once Rare Ben and Herrick
> Set older Fleet Street mad,
> With wit not esoteric,
> And laughter that was lyric,
> And roystering rhymes and glad.
>
> As they, we drink defiance
> To-night to all but Rhyme,
> And most of all to Science
> And all such skins of lions
> That hide the ass of time.

A very considerable poet and proseman, Mr. John Davidson, a Scotchman, by the way, from the vicinity of Paisley, in his recent work, "A Full and True Account of the Wonderful Mission of Earl Lavender, which Lasted One Night and One Day, with a History of the Pursuit of Earl Lavender and Lord Brumm, by Mrs. Scamler and Maud Emblem," brings two of his characters, Mr. Gurdon and Sir Harry Emblem, into the "Cheese" in a condition which would spell ruin to the landlord were it generally adopted, or at least became common when the Rhymers' Club is not in session. The two gentlemen had spent some £40 in eight days, and now they are "on the rocks" in a Strand restaurant. But foreigners have hard hearts, and so the delightful couple find their way to the Cap and Bells, which every Fleet Streeter will recognise as

the Cheshire Cheese. They order supper, and, though unprepared to pay, are prepared to justify their deeds. They were quite unconventional in the matter of settlement of accounts; they were financially naked, yet they were not ashamed. Fortunately for the landlord, it happens that on this night the Guild of Prosemen (oh, sarcastic Mr. Davidson!), otherwise the Rhymers' Club, are holding their meeting, and one of the members, acting more like an impulsive poet than a mere proseman, settles their account and introduces them to the club. There we must say farewell to Mr. Davidson's creations, but we cannot leave the Rhymers without quoting, by the kindness of the author and the publisher, the following exquisite

BALLADE OF THE CHESHIRE CHEESE IN FLEET STREET.

I know a home of antique ease
  Within the smoky city's pale,
A spot wherein the spirit sees
  Old London through a thinner veil.
  The modern world so stiff and stale,
You leave behind you when you please,
  For long clay pipes and great old ale
And beefsteaks in the "Cheshire Cheese."

Beneath this board Burke's, Goldsmith's knees
  Were often thrust—so runs the tale—
'Twas here the Doctor took his ease,
  And wielded speech that like a flail
  Threshed out the golden truth. All hail,
Great Souls! that met on nights like these,
  Till morning made the candles pale,
And revellers left the "Cheshire Cheese."

By kindly sense and old decrees
  Of England's use they set their sail
We press to never-furrowed seas,
  For vision-worlds we breast the gale,

And still we seek and still we fail,
For still the "glorious phantom" flees.
Ah well! no phantom are the ale
And beefsteaks of the "Cheshire Cheese."

ENVOI.

If doubts or debts thy soul assail,
If Fashion's forms its current freeze,
Try a long pipe, a glass of ale,
And supper at the "Cheshire Cheese."

"THE 49 CLUB"

is a more recent club which meets at the "Cheese" to partake, as their "Chronicle" has it, of "a curious mysterie

Yclept ye 49 pudding,
Also Grylled Bones,
Also Stewed Cheese,

together with such Olde Ales, Coſtlie Wines, and strong waters as may fuit ye taſte, purſe, or conscience of ye Members."

The Chronicle of this club is very diverting, and begins with a motto *not* from Goethe,

Ein guter Trunk
Nacht Alte junk

which is, after all, a very partial and temporary truth. For the guidance of other social clubs I cannot refrain from quoting *in extenso* the article headed "Rules."

"The Rules of the Club being of the sort once heard are never forgotten, there is no need to repeat them in this Chronicle."

So much for the Forty-niners.

THE SOAKERS' CLUB.

"We'll have flesh for holidays, fish for fasting days, and moreo'er puddings and flapjacks; and thou shalt be welcome," was the Shakesperean motto of this frankly christened club. The pious founder of the club tells us in a finely printed booklet that "it was deemed a requisite that your club should flourish under some rollicking epithet such as had not previously been 'empounded' by any other fraternity. The title should be terse; it should also be outrageous. It should smack of the *caveau*, and have the scent of the beeswing. Accordingly, many have been the creations that have in turn possessed the mind of your promoters. Fuddling clubs, gorging clubs, out-Heroding Herod clubs—these comprised a whole hand of clubs, in which was not a single trump. Then did your promoters bethink themselves of that unctuous cognomen, 'The Soakers.' The title is a nudity. . . . The name of 'The Soakers' Club' is selected only as conveying a sharp antithetical travestie upon our sober habits as moderate men." This last statement is consolatory, for it would have been unpleasant if the club had come to the "Cheese" merely to make manifest their loyalty to their name. They were good fellows, and, though not quite antithetical to their designation, did not allow it to run riot with their moderate tendencies. They dined at the "Cheese" regularly for years, but their numbers did not increase, owing probably to the frank brutality of their title, and the natural result was that they gradually dwindled away. Moral: There is something in a name after all.

THE ST. DUNSTAN'S CLUB.

Sir Walter Scott openly admitted his preference for a title that told the reader nothing. He gives a fine description of Mary Queen of Scots in one of his novels, but the temptation which would have been too much for a writer of the G. P. R. James order was avoided by the Wizard of the North. He did not call the novel by the name of the hapless queen; too much of Mary would have been expected from him if he had, and the balance of the story would have been lost. Therefore we learn about Loch Leven and Langside under the negative appellation of "The Abbot." So with "The Saint Dunstan's Club," the title is most respectable, and it says very little as to what the St. Dunstan's Club is. No wife, however shrewd, could object to her marital slave being a member of the St. Dunstan's, while even the most angelic of ladies would scarcely like to see her lord flourishing as a leader among "The Soakers." Therefore has the St. Dunstan's flourished like a green bay tree for over a century. Its proud boast is that it has contributed more Common Councilmen and Aldermen (and consequently Lord Mayors) to the Corporation of the City of London than any other club in the Metropolis.

The St. Dunstan's is pre-eminently a social club, neither party nor religion entering into its management. As may be expected, its members (now limited to twenty-eight) are leading men in their respective walks of life. The St. Dunstan's Club is called after the courageous English saint who, according to tradition, once pulled Satan by the nose with a pair of pincers. This episode in the life of the holy friar is represented on the insignia of the club. The club

legend is that St. Dunstan shook the devil all round the boundaries of the parish, and then dropped him in the Temple, hence the origin of the name of the "Devil's Own" applied to the legal profession, hence also the name of the "Devil" tavern, nearly opposite St. Dunstan's Church, where the Apollo Club was presided over by Ben Jonson. Fleet Streeters can no longer "go to the Devil," in the sense of going to any particular tavern, but anyone of respectability may be introduced to Child's Bank, No. 1 Fleet Street, which stands on the Devil's site. The bankers preserve in their parlour Jonson's Latin rules set down for the guidance of the club.

To recur to the St. Dunstan's Club, it appears by the Minute Book that it was first established at Anderton's Coffee House on March 10, 1790, by the Rev. Joseph Williamson, the then Vicar of St. Dunstan's, Mr. Nicholls, of St. Bride's, Deputy of the South Side of the Ward of Farringdon Without, and some fifteen others, inhabitants of Fleet Street and its immediate vicinity. The club was limited to thirty members, whereof twenty-six were to be inhabitants of the parish, and four gentlemen resident in the ward. A chairman, treasurer, and secretary were annually elected at the first meeting of the club in the month of October, and the toasts were fixed by resolution to be as follows:

1st.—The King.

2nd.—The Queen, the Prince of Wales, and the rest of the Royal Family.

3rd.—Unanimity to this Parish.

4th.—Prosperity to the Ward.

5th.—The Absent Members.

At the first regular meeting of the club Mr.

(*By permission of* Messrs. Ingram Brothers, *Proprietors of "The Sketch."*)

Brewer, of St. Sepulchre's, who was the Deputy for the North Side of the Ward, was duly elected a member, and at a meeting held on October 17, 1792, the celebrated John Wilkes, Alderman of the Ward, was unanimously elected an honorary member. The subscription to the club was one guinea per annum, and the principal source of income appears to have been derived from wagers for bottles of wine amongst the members, the annual elections for Common Councilmen in the Ward always producing a good number of bets as to the position of the various members of the club at the declaration of the poll. Wagers were laid about every conceivable thing under the sun, as a few of the following examples will show :—

January 25, 1792.—"Mr. Whipham laid Mr. P. North a gallon of claret that 14 days from this date the 3 per Cent. Consols would be 95 per cent." Mr. Whipham lost.

The members do not seem to have gone home at 11 o'clock, as they should have done according to the rules of the club, as the following bet shows : —

January 16, 1793.—"Mr. P. North lays Mr. Hounsom a bottle of wine that he (Mr. P. North) will be in bed before 2 o'clock the next morning (January 17), and Mr. Hounsom lays Mr. P. North that he has lost the above wager."

The following quaint bet shows that the price of a Welsh rarebit in those days was "twopence."

June 12, 1793.—"Mr. P. North lays that Mr. Hounsom will not forget to pay Mr. Thorne the 2*d.* to-morrow in the course of the day which he (Mr. Thorne) had lent and advanced for him to pay the waiter 2*d.* for a Welsh rarebit which Mr. Hounsom had for his supper."

Ten other members also wagered whether he would or would not pay the *2d.* The result of these bets we find duly chronicled as follows:—

January 19, 1793.—"Mr. Thorne reported that Mr. Hounsom had paid him the *2d.* at half-past 9 o'clock in the morning."

The following wagers are somewhat suggestive:—

June 12, 1793.—"Mr. Lambe and Mr. Dep. Nicholls '1 bottle.' Mr. Lambe lays that Mr. Dep. Nicholls knows Miss W——. *Upon explanation Mr. Dep. Nicholls lost.* Mr. Jones and Mr. J. North '1 bottle.' Mr. Jones lays that neither Mr. Lambe nor Mr. Dep. Nicholls knows Miss W——. Mr. Jones lost. Mr. Dep. Nicholls requested that the club would permit him to pay a bottle for having termed Miss W—— Mr. Hounsom's *friend* instead of *neighbour.* Ordered that it be granted. Mr. Lambe and Mr. J. North 'a bottle.' Mr. Lambe lays that he (Mr. Lambe) never ran away from a good thing. After some discussion it was decided that Mr. Lambe had lost the bet.

In 1795 a great number of bets were made about the wearing of hair powder, and the wagering was so keen that counsel's opinion was taken as to who had won the respective bets; the original opinion and decision of the counsel (Mr. George Bond, of Serjeants' Inn) is attached to the Minute Book.

It has also been the custom of the club to wager on the "*first letter*" of the King's or Queen's Speech after the words "*My Lords and Gentlemen.*" This naturally affords great scope for speculation, which, it appears by the minutes, the members have taken full advantage of. When the funds of the club were low the following among other expedients was adopted:

February 22, 1792.—"Resolved that any member of this club elected to any office of honour or emolument shall pay for the benefit of the club one bottle of port wine."

With one more extract from the minutes I will conclude this short eventful history of the club.

April 8, 1795.—"Mr. Hounsom and Mr. Whipham '1 bottle.' Mr. Hounsom lays that the Prince of Wales will not have issue within the space of 12 months. Mr. Fisher and Mr. Williams '1 bottle.' Mr Fisher lays that the Prince of Wales will have issue within the space of 12 months. Mr. Thorne and Mr. George '1 bottle.' Mr. Thorne lays that the Princess of Wales will be delivered of a son or daughter within 12 calendar months."

April 22, 1795.—"Rev. Mr. Williamson and Mr. Ustonson '1 bottle.' Mr. Williamson lays that the Princess of Wales is not delivered of a son or daughter within 12 calendar months. Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Piggott '1 bottle.' Mr. Butterworth lays that the Prince of Wales will not have issue within 12 months."[1]

THE LEGITIMIST CLUB.

Before leaving the interesting subject of "Cheese" clubs it would be unfair not to mention one more of the many which enjoy on occasion the hospitality of the "Cheese." Most people in this land, and presumably everybody in America, would consider the club somewhat belated. It has an idea that Queen

[1] 1895-6. Only a hundred years! The present treasurer of the club is the gentleman who is responsible for the mechanical outbringing of this great book.

Victoria is a usurper, and that the rightful sovereign of these isles and of the empire is some foreign potentate whom even his own states disown. The following paragraph from the *Daily Telegraph* of March 25, 1895, will show, however their views on high politics may be considered, the excellence of their taste in gastronomy cannot be called in question :—

"A few gentlemen are still left in this hasteful, bustling, and forgetful age who have time to remember that James I. ascended the throne of England on March 24, 1603. It is hardly necessary to add that they are members of the Thames Valley Legitimist Club, who spend their leisure in moaning over the extinguished glories of their country since the expulsion of James II. Taking advantage of the fact that yesterday was not only the anniversary of the date just given, but was also Mothering Sunday, when the rigidity of the Lenten fast is temporarily suspended, they dined together last evening in the Old Cheshire Cheese, and after doing justice to the famous Johnsonian puddings and other viands, amused themselves after their wont by inspecting a piece of the scaffold on which some unfortunate followers of the House of Stuart were executed. The health of the Queen was drunk, and it was incidentally mentioned as a fact not generally known that, with two exceptions, every sovereign in Europe was descended from the saintly mother of the monarch whose anniversary they were that day celebrating. The health of Charles VII. of Spain, whoever he may be, was duly honoured."

CHAPTER VIII

DR. JOHNSON'S HOMES AND HAUNTS

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
  Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
  The warmest welcome at an inn.

SHENSTONE.

IT is a common belief that Fleet Street is dotted with houses which were Dr. Johnson's homes in later years, and with the taverns in which he sat drinking tea and talking philosophy till the small hours of the morning. It is not so. The Doctor's house at No. 1 Inner Temple Lane has given way to "Johnson's Buildings."

In Johnson's Court (named after Thomas Johnson, citizen and merchant taylor, and one of the Common Council from 1598 till his death in 1625) the Doctor lived from 1765 to 1776, and during his "journey" in Scotland humorously described himself as "Johnson

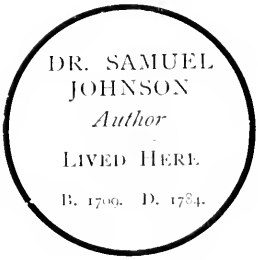
of that Ilk." The house (No. 7) has, however, gone the way of all bricks and mortar. In 1776 he removed to No. 8 Bolt Court, where he passed the rest of his life. The house was demolished soon after his death. In fact there is only one house—No. 17 Gough Square—on which we can look and say, "Here dwelt Dr. Johnson."

In an interesting article on "Dr. Johnson's Homes and Haunts," the *St. James's Gazette* of October 10, 1887, says that the names of seventeen taverns which knew the lexicographer's presence will have come down to us, and of these but five are in existence at the present day. "In Fleet Street," continues the writer, "there is but one tavern—the Cheshire Cheese—to which the true believer should allow himself to be attracted. Goldsmith lived in the same court (No. 6, nearly opposite the main entrance to the 'Cheese'), and there can be no doubt that he and the Doctor spent many an evening in the same old rooms. These are all that survive of Johnson's favoured taverns. It is the custom to speak of the Mitre, now the Clachan, as the house which Boswell mentions so often. But this is certainly a mistake. The Mitre of Johnson's day was situated a few doors nearer Temple Bar. The landlord of the Clachan displays 'Johnson and Boswell's room,' but without any authority. . . 'Child's Bank' in Fleet Street stands where stood the Devil tavern—famous long before the lexicographer's time as the scene of many of Ben Jonson's frolics. They are all gone, these hallowed precincts with which 'Fleet Street is dotted' in the imagination of impulsive idolaters; all except the house in Gough Square and the tavern in Wine Office Court."

There is a not unnatural tone of sadness in the

conclusion of the *St. James's* article; one seems to hear the plaint of Charles Lamb's "all gone, the old familiar faces." Gone or going are the old familiar places. A perfect fury of rebuilding has overtaken London, and ancient landmarks are being obliterated without ruth as without remorse. Since the *St. James's* article appeared, Gough Square itself has undergone the inevitable alteration—for the worse from an æsthetic point of view. It once was surrounded with well-built, commodious, and dignified, if not imposing dwellings. The rich colour of their fine red brick, mellowed and subdued by age, and rendered delightful to the eye, wearied amid the wilderness of meaner houses, by the flowers and green climbing plants that arose from the window sills, is now only a memory. Sallow, unwholesome-looking houses, built of the refuse of London's dust bins, accommodate printers and their machinery on three sides of the square. Fortunately for the devotee, at the western end (the square is paradoxically an oblong, and has ends) the Doctor's house still stands intact. Here his wife died in 1752, and here he completed his Dictionary in 1755. In his note book for 1831, Carlyle, that stern admirer of stout old Samuel, mentions having paid a visit to the house and interviewed the occupant, who was apparently under the impression that his illustrious predecessor in the tenancy had been a schoolmaster. So he had been, and one of his pupils, a pupil of whom any master might have been proud, was David Garrick. But the tenant knew not that schoolmastering had long been abandoned when the Doctor was compiling his Dictionary in that by no means majestic abode. On the right-hand side of the doorway the Society of

Arts have placed a plaque with the following inscription :



CHAPTER IX

THE "CHEESE" AND ITS FARE—A GREAT FALL IN PUDDING

Resurgam.

La découverte d'un mets nouveau fait plus pour le bonheur du genre humain que la découverte d'une étoile.—BRILLAT-SAVARIN.

IF, as Brillat-Savarin says, the discovery of a new dish does more for the happiness of mankind than the discovery of a star, how much more deserving of human gratitude is the discoverer of the "Cheese" pudding than a Herschel or an Adams?

The *Sportsman* of March 30, 1887, has a long and eulogistic article on the "Cheese," but exigencies of space preclude my quoting it in its entirety. The writer says: "In the main arteries of traffic the ancient hostelries have disappeared before the resistless march of modern progress—I had almost written vandalism. The last to vanish was the famous Cock tavern in Fleet Street. Happily the most famous of London ancient taverns is left to us in the Old

Cheshire Cheese, which is yet nightly haunted by the shade of Dr. Johnson, whose modern prototypes still enjoy their steaks and punch, and discuss politics, polemics, and plays, though they wear short hair and masher collars instead of full-bottomed wigs and ruffles.

"The 'Old C. C.' is a retiring, respectable, very conservative, and hoary-headed aristocrat of the bygone school. Changes are made with a very rebellious spirit, and the introduction of a patent American machine for squeezing lemons savoured so much of modern progress that its appearance nearly raised a riot amongst the patrons of the saw-dust-strewed bar. The 'Cheese' has no glaring front, nor does it invite custom by acres of plate-glass, glittering gasaliers, or gorgeous frescoes. A modest representation of a cheese in dingy glass does duty for a sign, so far as the street of Fleet is concerned. The house has its school of customers, who look upon it as a species of club, without the expense of entrance fee. How old the original edifice was I am not prepared to say, but I notice by an ancient sideboard that it was rebuilt in 1667.

"Inside, the hostelry has a curiously quaint, old-world appearance, and this has been jealously preserved to good purpose by successive proprietors. Rebuilt, decorated in the prevailing style of public-house architecture, the 'Old C. C.' would have nothing to recommend it over scores—nay, hundreds—of its fellows.

"The dining-room is fitted with rows of wooden benches and wooden tables without the slightest pretence of show. But the cloths are white and clean, and the cutlery bright, while the china service

is of that ancient and undemonstrative blue design which delighted our forefathers, and is known as the willow pattern. The glasses are large, thick, and heavy, and might be used with effect in an argument. But—whisper it not in the ears of Bill Sikes, and tell it not to Fagan—the silver is silver, and not Brummagem, and has seen more service than would destroy half the property of modern public-houses. On the walls hang three prominent objects, a barometer, a print of Dr. Johnson, and an old oil painting by Wageman, representing the interior of the room, with a gentleman trying his steak with his knife; a waiter holding up a port wine cork in the well-known attitude 'two with you'; and a cat rubbing her oleaginous hide in anxious expectation against the leg of the settle. This picture, like one in the bar, is an heirloom, or rather a fixture, which cannot be sold—'for ever and ever, amen!'—but must pass from landlord to landlord.

"Upstairs there are extensive ranges of kitchens where burnt sacrifices are being perpetually offered up in the shape of mutton and beef; a dining-room and a smoke-room, dark-panelled and cosy, where a man may forget the world and be lost to it during a much-coveted mid-day rest. Of other rooms on other floors no man knoweth, save that in rumours it is alleged there have been private parties over marrow-bones and puddings, a theory which is well borne out by echoes of peals of laughter, and the popping of champagne corks. Whatever the place may be above, however, it has no comparison with the glories that lie below the paving. The privileged few who are allowed to go into the wondrous cellars —redolent of sawdust, cobweb-coated, and covered

with dust—wander amidst avenues of wine-bins with wonder and astonishment at the space occupied underground as compared with the upper regions. The entrance to the cellars is in the dingy office in the street of Fleet, which is devoted to the wholesale department, and here a record is kept of the rich old ports and generous clarets sleeping below, with the merry devils of laughter bottled up in quarts and magnums in overcoats of pink and foil. No man could remember them, be his experience as a cellarman what it may.

"The 'Old C. C.' is a fine record of the passing seasons. When genial spring has brought forward vegetation, the waiter's cheerful intimation that 'Asparagus is on, sir,' recalls the fact forcibly to your notice. When, later, ''Am and peas' can be secured, the vision of early summer is perfect, and is not even disturbed by boiled beans and bacon. In the hot, sultry days, cool salads are appropriate, and when these disappear there is a closing in of daylight and a general warning that the year is past its prime. Then does the 'Cheese' draw its blinds and light its gas, stoke up its fires, and announce its great puddings. Yet further ahead, when raw November days come upon us, the savoury smell of Irish stew—that fine winter lining for the hungry—pervades the place, and so the season goes round. Of all the changes brought about by the rolling year, however, none is so popular as the advent of

THE PUDDING,

though it means frost, and damp, and cold winds. *The* pudding (italics for 'the,' please,) has no rival in size or quality. Its glories have been sung in

THE OLD BIRD-CAGE

every country, even the *Fort Worth (Texas) Gazette* having something to say on the subject. The pudding ranges from fifty to sixty, seventy, and eighty pounds' weight, and gossip has it that in the dim past the rare dish was constructed to proportions of a hundred-weight. It is composed of a fine light crust in a huge basin, and there are entombed therein beef-steaks, kidneys, oysters, larks, mushrooms, and wondrous spices and gravies, the secret of which is known only to the compounder. The boiling process takes about

SIXTEEN TO TWENTY HOURS,

and the smell on a windy day has been known to reach as far as the Stock Exchange. The process of carving the pudding on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when it is served, is as solemn a ceremony as the cutting of the mistletoe with the golden sickle of the Druids. The late proprietor, Mr. Beaufoy A. Moore, could be with difficulty restrained from rising from his bed, when stricken down with illness, to drive to the 'Cheese' and serve out the pudding. No one, he believed, could do it with such judicious care and judgment as he did. But Mr. Charles, his successor, has just such a dainty hand, an equally good eye for perspective, and few men could more readily spot the liver wing of a lark in the midst of the savoury mass when the 'lid' is off. Once, and once only, was that pudding dropped. Alas, the sad day! In the room sat an expectant, hungry army of fifty men. The waiter, bearing in triumph the pudding, appeared smiling on the scene. His foot slipped, he tripped, the pudding wavered, and then bowled along the floor, breaking up and gathering sawdust as it went. There was a breath-

less silence. The proprietor dropped the upraised carver, stood speechless for a moment, and then went out and wept bitterly. The occasion was too much for him. One after another the awed and hungry crowd put on their hats and departed, with sorrowful faces and watering mouths.

"For many years the hostelry has been in the hands of the Moore family, and that the place may long remain under the management of that real good sportsman, Mr. Charles Moore, we all sincerely trust, for he is the life and soul of 'Ye Olde C. C.'"

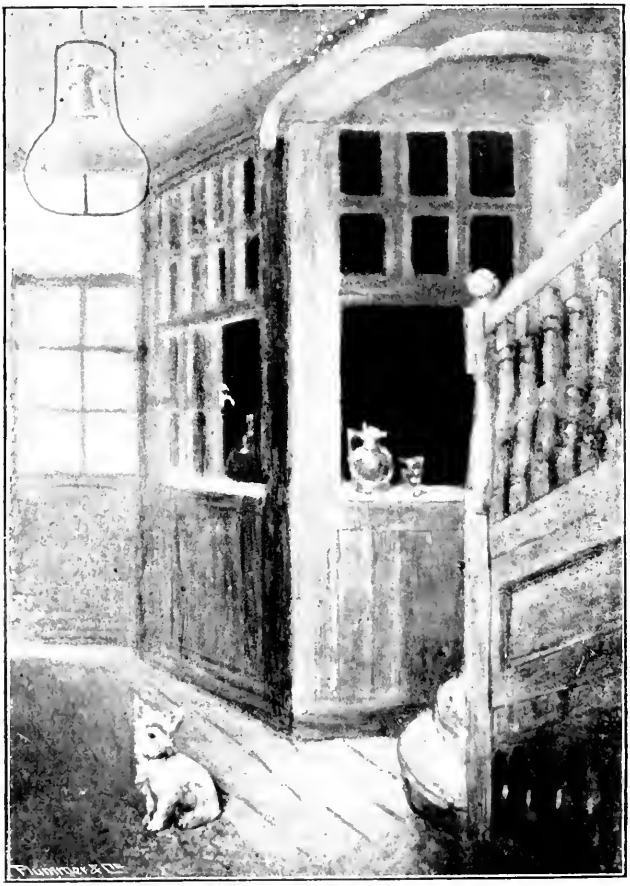
My friend of the *Sportsman* does not relate the whole story of the fall. The fall was great, but the number of customers who noticed the descent, if their subsequent tales could be believed, were like the landlord, a mighty host. As the late Mr. Moore used to say, the half of London must have been in the bar on that eventful day. The real fact of the fall was that the then head-waiter, Tom, slipped on the stair, and pudding and he commingled at the foot.

Mr. Moore as usual, with his hat off, awaited in all solemnity the advent of the great dish. It came too quickly, and his anguish was too keen for tears. Sore at heart, he made his way as best he might to the wine office, and addressing in softened tones his son Charlie (the present landlord), said, "The pudding's down!"

"That's all right! Why aren't you carving it?"

"Yes! but it's down on the floor. Tom has dropped it downstairs."

Then sank Mr. Moore into his chair, and the dining-room knew him not that day.



THE OLD BIRD-CAGE—FROM THE OUTSIDE

CHAPTER X

MR. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA AND OTHERS ON THE "CHEESE"

For he's a jolly good fellow.—*Old Song.*

I HAVE already alluded to the death of Mr. Sala in 1895, and will now say no more about him than that no one was more capable of writing on the subject of Fleet Street than he. In an admirable paper entitled "Brain Street," he describes in "Old and New London" (Cassell, Petter, and Galpin) Wine Office Court and the "Cheshire Cheese."

"The vast establishments," says Mr. Sala, "of Messrs. Pewter and Antimony, type-founders (Alderman Antimony was Lord Mayor in the year '46); of Messrs. Quoin, Case, and Chappell, printers to the Board of Blue Cloth; of Messrs. Cutedge and Treecalf, bookbinders; with the smaller industries of Scawper and Tinttool, wood-engravers; and Treacle, Gluepot, and Lampblack, printing-roller makers, are packed together in the upper part of the court as closely as herrings in a cask. The 'Cheese' is at the Brain Street end. It is a little lop-sided,

wedged-up house, that always reminds you, structurally, of a high-shouldered man with his hands in his pockets It is full of holes and corners and cupboards and sharp turnings; and in ascending the stairs to the tiny smoking-room you must tread cautiously, if you would not wish to be tripped up by plates and dishes momentarily deposited there by furious waiters. The waiters at the 'Cheese' are always furious. Old customers abound in the comfortable old tavern, in whose sanded-floored eating-rooms a new face is a rarity; and the guests and the waiter are the oldest of familiars. Yet the waiter seldom fails to bite your nose off as a preliminary measure when you proceed to pay him. How should it be otherwise when on that waiter's soul there lies heavy a perpetual sense of injury caused by the savoury odour of steaks, and 'muts' to follow; of cheese bubbling in tiny tins—the 'specialty' of the house; of floury potatoes and fragrant green peas; of cool salads, and cooler tankards of bitter beer; of extra-creaming stout and 'goes' of Cork and 'rack,' by which is meant gin; and, in the winter-time, of Irish stew and rumpsteak pudding, glorious and grateful to every sense? To be compelled to run to and fro with these succulent viands from noon to late at night, without being able to spare time to consume them in comfort—where do waiters dine, and when, and how?—to be continually taking other people's money only for the purpose of handing it to other people—are not these grievances sufficient to cross-grain the temper of the mildest-mannered waiter? Somebody is always in a passion at the 'Cheese': either a customer because there is not fat enough on his 'point' steak, or because there is too much bone

in his mutton-chop; or else the waiter is wroth with the cook; or the landlord with the waiter, or the barmaid with all. Yes, there is a barmaid at the 'Cheese,' mewed up in a box not much bigger than a bird-cage, surrounded by groves of lemons, 'ones' of cheese, punch-bowls, and cruets of mushroom-catsup. I should not care to dispute with her, lest she should quoit me over the head with a punch-ladle, having a William-the-Third guinea soldered in the bowl."

In another part of "Old and New London," by Walter Thornbury, illustrated, Mr. Sala says: "Let it be noted in candour that law finds its way to the 'Cheese' as well as literature; but the law is, as a rule, of the non-combatant, and, consequently, harmless order. Literary men who have been called to the bar, but do not practise; briefless young barristers, who do not object to mingling with newspaper men; with a sprinkling of retired solicitors (amazing old dogs these for old port wine; the landlord has some of the same bin which served as Hippocrene to Judge Blackstone when he wrote his 'Commentaries')—these make up the legal element of the 'Cheese.' Sharp attorneys in practice are not popular there. There is a legend that a process server once came in at a back door to serve a writ; but being detected by a waiter, was skilfully edged by that wary retainer into Wine Bottle Court, right past the person on whom he was desirous to inflict the 'Victoria by the grace, &c.' Once in the court, he was set upon by a mob of inky-faced boys just released from the works of Messrs. Ball, Roller, and Scraper, machine printers, and by the skin of his teeth only escaped being converted into pie."

"Old and New London," ch. 10, part iii. p. 123, also contains this paragraph :—

"Mr. William Sawyer[1] has also written a very admirable sketch of the 'Cheese' and its old-fashioned conservative ways, which we cannot resist quoting : —

"'We are a close, conservative, inflexible body—we, the regular frequenters of the "Cheshire,"' says Mr. Sawyer. 'No new-fangled notions, new usages, new customs, or new customers for us. We have our history, our traditions, and our observations, all sacred and inviolable. Look around! There is nothing new, gaudy, flippant, or effeminately luxurious here. A small room, with heavily timbered windows, a low-planked ceiling. A huge projecting fireplace, with a great copper boiler always on the simmer, the sight of which might have roused even old John Willett, of the "Maypole," to admiration. High, stiff-backed, inflexible "settees," hard and grainy in texture, box off the guests half a dozen each to a table. Sawdust covers the floor, giving forth that peculiar faint odour which the French avoid by the use of the vine sawdust with its pleasant aroma. A chief ornament in which we indulge is a picture over the mantel-piece, a full-length of a now departed waiter, whom, in the long past, we caused to be painted, by subscription of the whole room, to commemorate his virtues, and our esteem. We sit bolt upright round our tables, waiting, but not impatient. A time-honoured solemnity is about to be observed. and we, the old stagers, is it for us to precipitate it?

[1] The late Mr. Sawyer was for many years the brilliant editor of *Funny Folks*. His articles signed "Rupert," in the *Budget*, were distinguished for their chaste humour and felicitous style. They have often been reprinted.

There are men in the room who have dined here every day for a quarter of a century—aye, the whisper goes round that one man did it on his wedding-day! In all that time the more staid and well-regulated among us have observed a steady regularity of feeding. Five days in the week we have "Rotherham steak"—that mystery of mysteries—or our "chop and chop to follow," with the indispensable wedge of Cheddar—unless it is preferred stewed or toasted—and on Saturday decorous variety is afforded in a plate of the world-renowned "Cheshire" pudding. It is of this latter luxury that we are now assembled to partake, and that with all fitting ceremony and observance.'"

CHAPTER XI

THE PRESS AND THE "CHEESE"

> Crown high the goblets with a cheerful draught;
> Enjoy the present hour; adjourn the future thought.
>
> DRYDEN'S *Virgil.*

THE "Cheese" began early to get itself into the newspapers. Among the first notices is one which appeared in *Common Sense, or, the Englishman's Journal*[1] of Saturday, April 23, 1737, running as follows:

"On Sunday, April 17, one Harper, who formerly lived with Mr. Holyoake at the sign of the 'Old Cheshire Cheese,' in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, for eight years, found Means to conceal himself in the House, and early on Monday Morning got into the Room where the Daughter lay, and where Mr. Holyoake (as he well knew) kept his Money; and accordingly he took away a small Box wherein was

[1] Printed and sold by J. Purser in White Fryars, and G. Hawkins at Milton's Head, between the Two Temple Gates, Fleet St. MDCCXXXVIII.

£200 and Notes to the Value of £600 more. The Child, hearing a Noise, happily awaked, and cry'd out, 'Mammy, Mammy, a Man has carried away the Box;' which alarm'd her Father and Mother, who lay near, and immediately they got up; which oblig'd the Fellow to hide himself in the Chimney, where he was discover'd, with the Box carefully ty'd up in a Handkerchief, and being secur'd, was afterwards carried before the Lord Mayor, who committed him to Newgate."

This extract is interesting as showing that Dr. Johnson was not the creator of the fortunes of the Old Cheshire Cheese, as some ill-conditioned people have alleged; and I doubt whether the present landlord keeps much more of coin and notes under his pillow than Mr. Holyoake left under the guardianship of his little daughter 149 years ago.

The next public notice which I have been able to trace also relates to crime, this time somewhat more serious than the filching of the day's takings.

In the *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser* of Monday, August 9, 1784, we read an account of an attempted murder at the "Cheese." It appears that a porter in the Temple named John Gromont induced a woman who had cohabited with, and then deserted him, to accept a drink at a public-house in Wine Office Court, "where, starting up in a fit of frenzy, he cut the woman's throat."

"Before the transaction he had made several attempts to destroy himself at Mr. Bosher's, the Rainbow, opposite the end of Chancery Lane, in Fleet Street, and other public-houses in the neighbourhood."

What happened to the frenzied porter for taking part in this "transaction" I have not discovered, and

probably nobody in this century would be very interested to know.

A notice of the "Cheese" in 1815, under the ownership of Mr. Carlton, appears on p. 126.

Coming to a more recent period, we find the press positively littering the "Cheese" with its broadsheets. *Punch*, for April 14, 1864, describes a famous evening at the "Cheese." Mr. John Cordy Jeaffreson, no mean authority, in his "A Book about the Table," mentions the "Cheese" as one of the three houses in the immediate neighbourhood of the Inns of Court worthy of comparison with those near St. Paul's, and so the references go on ever spreading till they cross the Atlantic and even return from the Antipodes.

It is impossible within the limits of this little book to print all that has been written about the "Cheese," but a short selection may be permitted.

The *Kent Examiner and Ashford Chronicle* of June 20, 1885, contains a reference to the Old City Taverns. It states: "One by one our old-fashioned taverns are being improved off the face of the earth, or, if not done away with entirely, become so helplessly renewed with modern style, as to be beyond recognition. But there is still one left to us, and almost within a stone's throw of the Old Cock. Up a court—Wine Office Court—there stands, or did last week, that most ancient of inns, 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese,' with its sawdust floor and oaken benches. Although the origin of this house is not altogether involved in obscurity, there is a decided want of complete details as to its very early history. It is very generally believed that Shakespeare was one of its numerous frequenters, but undoubtedly one famous man was, namely—François Marie Arouet,

otherwise Voltaire—while often enough were present Bolingbroke, Pope, and Congreve, and it is well known that Rare Ben Jonson was one of its most jolly frequenters. Coming down to more modern times, among the many customers of the house have been Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Tom Taylor, Tom Hood, and last, but not least, Thackeray and Dickens. As in the past, it still enjoys the reputation of supplying a good article; but the specialty of the house is its celebrated steak pudding, served up on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the winter months, the secret of whose manufacture has never been allowed to penetrate beyond the mazes of Wine Office Court, and the recipe for which is said to be carefully deposited every Saturday afternoon in a patent iron safe of unexampled strength."

"A Walk up Fleet Street" is the title of an article that appeared in the *Sunday Times*. The following is an extract: "The Cheshire Cheese is not imposing in appearance, nor is it even to be seen from the street. Two little courts lead to its somewhat dingy portals; portals much frequented by the London correspondents of provincial journals and gallery reporters. More or less throughout every day of the week barristers and journalists—even members of Parliament are not always missing—come to this house for their dinner, and sit contentedly round the sides of two good old-fashioned rooms. But it is on Saturday that the Cheshire Cheese is seen at its best. Then it is that 'rump-steak pudding' makes its appearance; announced all the week, anxiously expected, come at last! No one need to ask whether the pudding is an attraction. Let him look into the

larger of the two rooms and judge for himself. There are ten tables round the apartment, each fitted with benches for six. For nearly half an hour sixty hungry men have been waiting anxiously for the arrival of that pudding. Granted that some of them are briefless barristers; assumed that some gain an honest living by reporting the occurrence of tragedies; allowed that 'special wire' men, whose duty it is to sit up all night for the purpose of purchasing an early copy of the London dailies and obtaining the best news therefrom for the country papers, are there; never did briefless barrister wait more eagerly for his first blue roll of paper; never did 'liner' look more anxiously for a good sensational murder; never did 'special wire' man buy *Times* or *Telegraph* more expectantly than do these now wait for their pudding. The pudding itself is no mean despicable dish. Its size is enormous, its appearance vast. King Arthur's pie, which boasted pieces of suet as big as any two thumbs, was poor compared with this rump-steak luxury. And as it is borne in triumphantly by waiters three, and placed on a little table just below the portrait of a *garçon* of the old school, who, with bottle and corkscrew in hand, is represented as making a dreadful grimace at the waiters for pudding in solemn conclave assembled, every lawyer, reporter, and reviewer gives a huge sniff, as though determined to make the most of the delicacy which is before him. But no indecency of haste is noticeable on the part of those who bear rule and authority over the dish. True that the room is full of impatient men, who, munching their bread, shuffling on their seats, peering steadfastly at the pudding, and hating each other heartily for coming to

lessen the general share, beckon and wink at the waiters, show, mysteriously, little pieces of silver, and otherwise intimate their ardent desire to be served. The landlord of the house well knows the importance of the occasion, and acquits himself like a man. His customers may hurry, but he is too well aware of what is right and proper at so interesting a moment to rush or move too quickly. So he glides in gently, looks up at the grinning picture, glances at the hungry ones around him, calls the waiters up into position at the front of the pudding, sharpens his knife, inspects the spoon, and in one way or another gets comfortably through another five minutes, to the intense agony of his patrons. But at last he pierced the pudding! Every eye is upon him, every man present looks as though he would make a rush and possess himself of it all; yet the landlord faints not, but calmly cuts up twelve pieces, deliberately adding meat thereto, on the various plates, till having finished the first 'batch,' he gently says 'Go,' and a dozen of the famished are served. Forty-eight men hate that landlord and his myrmidons intensely, for three minutes, when they themselves are served, and are able to imitate the more fortunate twelve. For a brief space all are eating ravenously; yet the landlord moves not; he knows full well that every man of them will send up for a second plateful, and the event shows he is right. But he is no longer viewed with feelings of unfriendliness: the pudding has done its work, and as the second plates are served slowly out, every lawyer and journalist leans back and smiles complacently. The consumption of the pudding now progresses but slowly; bitter beer is more frequently called for; wine is added thereto; while by three

o'clock most of the sixty have departed, fully resolved to have a share of the next week's excellent pudding."

The *Reporter*, of October 28, 1874, says of the "Cheese":—

"We have occasionally used this old-fashioned house for over a quarter of a century, and that for its chops and steaks, cold beef and salad, and marvellous rump-steak pudding, and for the alacrity with which these edibles are supplied the establishment is unmatchable in the metropolis. Besides, the malt liquors are of the strongest and the best brew, and the whiskies are mellow and old; whilst the ancient punch, which is served exactly as compounded in the days of Dr. Johnson, is simply nectar worthy of elevating even the gods."

In "Some Gossip about Famous Taverns" the *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* writes:—

"What man who has ever been called into Fleet Street, either on business or pleasure, does not know the sawdusted floor and old-time appointments of the Cheshire Cheese? Who would dare to confess ignorance of the Brobdingnagian chops, the world-famous point steaks, the stewed cheese, which constitute its main attractions all the year round? Who has not here devoted himself during the hot summer months, in the cool dining-room which seems ever impervious to the sun's rays, to the manufacture of an elaborate salad to enjoy with his cold beef? And who, again, has never yet been so fortunate as to witness that appetising procession to be seen every Saturday during the winter months, when Mr. Moore, the master of the house, in dress coat clad, and armed with a mighty carver, precedes into the room that mighty steak and oyster pudding, the secret of

whose manufacture has never been allowed to penetrate beyond the mazes of Wine Office Court, and the recipe for which is carefully deposited every Saturday evening in a patent iron safe of unexampled strength, the lock of which is guarded by a Deane's revolver, a Derringer, a bowie knife, and two Borgia daggers, all ready to spring out on the slightest attempt at lock-picking, to deal instant annihilation on the rash intruder?

"A tavern among taverns is, indeed, the Cheshire Cheese. It is impossible to deny or to fight against its attractions. Day after day, and year after year, the *habitués* grumble and growl about the awkward, uncomfortable seats, the time-worn tables, the uncarpeted floor, the narrow, inconvenient bar, in which, whatever the direction of the wind, all the draughts of an army of weathercocks seem to be collected; but day after day, and year after year, they continue to return, and are miserable if circumstances compel them to be absent.

"Men of letters of all grades greatly affect the Cheshire Cheese, and it is seldom, indeed, the chance visitor may not see among the diners three or four of the men whose pens influence the policy of our most powerful journals. But journalists, fortunately, can show themselves in public without being stared at, as are all other prominent members of the art world, for, thanks to the anonymity of our press,

> The world knows nothing of its greatest men,

when the great ones take to journalism as a profession. Yet I can assure my readers that, as a body, journalists have a very keen sense of the excellent in all things relating to eating and drinking.

With them the beautiful and true is paraphrased into the genuine and the good, and when the guiding spirit of a vast confederacy of the press, a special correspondent whose letters from many lands have been eagerly read by the public, a younger colleague who has not infrequently taken his readers into his confidence as to his dinners, a watchful votary of the turf, whose gastronomic powers are a proverb among his brethren, the portly and gigantic editor of a weekly paper, the bespectacled dramatic critic of the same sheets, and the writer of this gossip, are all known to patronise one tap, it may be safely assumed that tap is a good one; and herein lies the answer to my question. The secret of the success of the Cheshire Cheese is that everything sold within its doors is good. For this we prefer its sanded floors to marble halls, for this we listen curiously to the weird cry of the waiter up the crooked staircase of 'Rudderhumbake,' which, by old experience, we know heralds the approach of a choice cut from the mighty rump of a succulent shorthorn or an Aberdeen steer."

THE COMMON SERJEANT.

It having been widely rumoured that the influence of the late Mr. Moore contributed largely to the election of Sir William T. Charley as Common Serjeant of the City of London, *Truth*, of April 18, 1878, hit off the situation of the Corporation which had the power to elect the criminal judges of London in a long poem, the last verse of which runs:

Long may it last, and unreformed, its judges to elect,
And by its wise and worthy choice gain all the land's respect:
But, meanwhile, all the candidates who hope to win with ease,
Had best keep in with B. A. Moore, and dine oft at the "Cheese"!

The *Philadelphia Times*, of October 1884 thus refers to the "Cheese":—

"A famous man who haunted the 'Cheese' was Voltaire, side by side with Bolingbroke, Pope, and Congreve. The expression, 'He's not the cheese,' applies to one who was unequal, by his want of position and cleverness, to associate with the regular frequenters of the Old Cheshire Cheese. There is to-day an old play in manuscript in Scotland, written in Rare Ben Jonson's day, in which these lines occur:—

> "Heaven bless 'The Cheese' and all its goodly fare—
> I wish to Jove I could go daily there.
> Then fill a bumper up, my good friend, please—
> May fortune ever bless the 'Cheshire Cheese.'"

The *City Press* (October 30, 1875) gives a long notice of a book by Mr. Charles Hindley upon tavern anecdotes and sayings, including the origin of tavern signs. The reviewer says:—

"Unfortunately they are going out of fashion. Society more and more frequents the club. We do not think that any great gain. Club life is solitary and grand, tavern life is social; and London was never more brilliant than when Johnson and Boswell dined at the Mitre or the Cheshire Cheese, and were not only witty themselves, but the cause of wit in other men. Ben Jonson loved the 'Cheese'; and at one time you had only to walk into a Fleet Street coffee-house to become familiar with all the choice spirits of the age. Dean Swift, Addison, and Steele affected the tavern; so did Sheridan, and so did Lord Eldon, and so, indeed, did all men of mark down to our own time."

In another article, August 24, 1887, the *City Press* says: "There is the chair in which snuffy old Dr.

Johnson sat and dogmatised. There is the room in which probably Burke and Boswell, Fox and Sheridan, Garrick and Goldsmith, met the great philosopher and lexicographer in full conclave. A few steps off, in Gough Square, is the tall, plain, many-windowed house in which Dr. Johnson lived."

The following, from the *Fort Worth (Texas) Daily Gazette* will be read with interest:

"YE RUMPE STEAKE PUDDINGE.

"While I am on the subject of 'food,' I must be permitted to mention that I enjoyed the privilege of partaking of 'ye rumpe steake puddinge' a few days since at no less celebrated board than 'The Cheese,' Wine Office Court, Fleet Street. 'The Cheese,' or, to give it its full title, 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese,' is now the most historical tavern of all the old taverns in London. Nearly all the other taverns have had to make way for the more modern restaurant or public-house. Little is known, it seems, of the very early history of the place. A *brochure* entitled 'Round London,' published in 1725, describes the house as 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese tavern, near ye Flete Prison, an eating house for goodly fare.' And now in 1883, or very near the beginning of the year 1884, I can bear cheerful witness to the fact that it still deserves to be classed with the very few public places in London where one can secure 'goodly fare.' The rump-steak pudding, which is the special feature of the place, is certainly toothsome, and is not apt to be speedily forgotten by the epicure. It has been served promptly at one o'clock P.M. every Saturday 'since

when the memory of man runneth not to the contrary,' and the particular one that I assisted to dissect was enjoyed by quite a hundred persons. Though nominally a 'steak-pudding,' there are very many other ingredients in the dish than rump steak. It is said that for more than 200 years the old tavern has changed hands but twice, and that it is now in the hands of the third family that has helped to keep up its ancient reputation. It is also said that the recipe by which the pudding is builded is a secret that belongs to the place, and is as secret an heirloom as the old oil painting of Henry Todd, who, according to the inscription on the portrait, commenced waiter at the 'Old Cheshire Cheese' February 17, 1812. This picture was, according to the inscription again, 'painted by Wageman, July 1827, subscribed for by the gentlemen frequenting the coffee-room, and presented to Mr. Dolamore (the landlord) in trust, to be handed down as a heirloom to all future landlords of the Old Cheshire Cheese, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street.'"

"Henry Todd, 'Old' Harry as he was familiarly called by the visitors, had made a considerable sum of money while in his situation," writes the compiler of the great work on which the British Museum so prides itself, "Signs of Taverns," "but I am informed that a spendthrift son reduced his circumstances much. To a stranger he appears a morose, cynical kind of man, apparently not by any means adapted for the waitership of a tavern, although he is always attentive to the wants of his customers. Perhaps he was a different being when younger, and to those who were old customers of the house and who knew him well, he used more freedom probably.

"The portrait, I am informed, is the first attempt in oil by that exceedingly talented artist Wageman, and was painted at the instigation of a visitor to the house, a Mr. Thomas Morell, a well-known pen and quill dealer who resided in the Broadway, Ludgate Hill (a brother of the Morell also pen and ink dealer in Fleet Street), and who was well known to the public for his eccentricity by the name of Peculiar Tom Morell, from the singularity of his puffs and advertisements."

"Old Harry" retired soon after the portrait-painting from age and infirmity, but was alive at Christmas, 1838.

A story is told of a scientific gentleman of renown who, living a bachelor life and not despising the pleasures of the table, went to the tavern where he was accustomed to eat, and ordered a rump-steak pudding every day at six until further notice. To that gentleman we can offer no advice; more, we may indulge the hope that the puddings were the produce of the Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street, whither the critical in these substantial delicacies resort on Saturdays, when it pleases the Autocrat of the Dinner-table to have them prepared.

CHAPTER XII

WHAT THE WORLD SAYS OF THE "CHEESE"

> That all-softening, overpowering knell,
> The tocsin of the soul—the dinner-bell.—BYRON.

THE "Diner Out," in the *Evening Standard* of January 10, 1867, writes :—

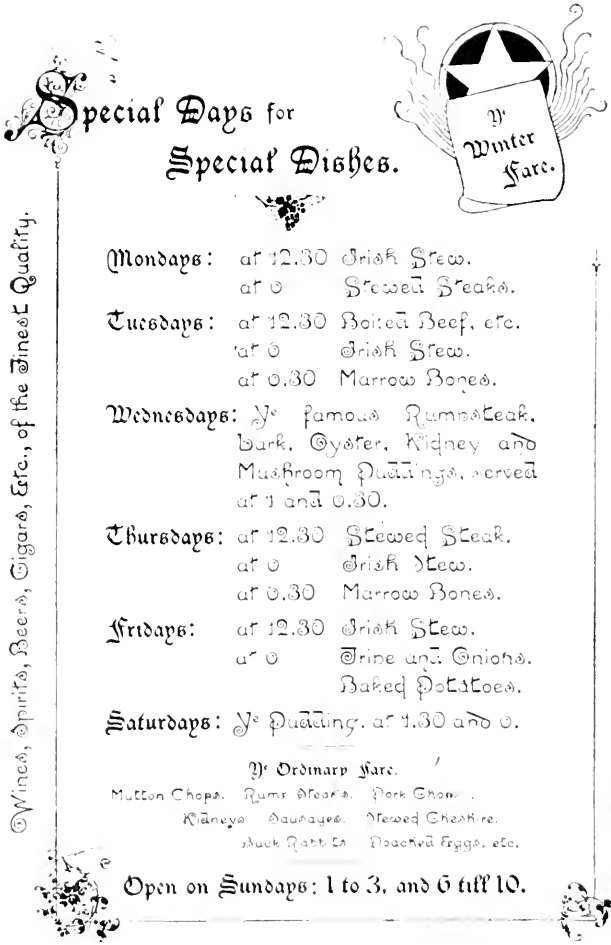
"In each of the apartments on the ground floor is a full-length portrait, in oil, of a departed waiter—subscribed for upon his retirement by the gentlemen 'using' the house. The one which most strikes my memory at the moment is the representation of a portly, respectable—scrupulously respectable—middle-aged man, clad in a costume worn early in the century—that is to say, the coat is of blue, the buttons are gilt, the cravat is a cheerful roll surmounting a frilled shirt, and the legs know no trousers but the breeches and stockings of departed days, when well-made men 'stood upon their legs' in something more than the merely literal sense of the term. The background of the picture is a faithful representation of a section of the room in which it is hung. The box before which the waiter is standing, opening a bottle of port (I say port, because a man would never open a bottle of sherry with the same grave, but

complacent, air of responsibility), is a speaking likeness, and so is evidently the representation of the guest for whom the order is being executed—a person even more respectable than the waiter, if possible, with a very high coat collar, his hair all brushed up to the top of his head, and a cute knowledge of wine depicted in every lineament of his countenance. You may be sure that no inferior quality is being opened for him. Indeed, the waiter is as incapable of deceiving as the guest of being deceived. The wine is evidently of that degree of excellence which impels people to talk about it while they drink it—a wine which is its own aim and end—not a mere stimulating drink, setting men on to be enthusiastic upon general subjects. The diner is plainly the model diner of the Cheshire Cheese, as the waiter is the model waiter. The presentation of such a testimonial to a favourite waiter is characteristic of the Cheshire Cheese as compared with the Cock.[1] There is more intimate companionship among the frequenters, and a larger proportion of them make the house their habitual resort. Even strangers will consort together sometimes, which is very seldom the case at the Cock. I suspect that the main reason for this difference is that at the Cock the legal element predominates; while at the Cheshire Cheese the commercial and miscellaneous elements are in the majority.

[1] The Cock, the birthplace of Lord Tennyson's "Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue," no longer stands on the northern side of Fleet Street. On its site is erected the Law Courts branch of the Bank of England. A new Cock, however, has arisen on the southern side of the street, and thither some of the old pews and furniture have been transported.

"The Cheshire Cheese is famous for steak-pudding, agreeably tempered by kidneys, larks, and oysters. This dish, which is often ordered for private parties, and even for private houses, is frequently made the occasion of social gatherings of an extensive character—so much so, indeed, that Madame Roland might have extended her celebrated apostrophe to Liberty by saying—'O Steak Pudding, how much conviviality is committed in thy name!' Whatever you get at the 'Cheshire' is sure to be good and capitally cooked."

From an article entitled "At the Cheshire Cheese" which appeared in the *Commercial Travellers' Review* I extract the following:—"At one o'clock—the time at which the 'Cheese' is most frequented—we accompanied our friends up Fleet Street, and then by devious ways and turnings, more than enough to upset our geography, until we finally arrived at that part of Wine Office Court where the 'Cheshire' stands. We were ushered into what seemed most like the after cabin of a steamer, with comfortably arranged and well appointed miniature tables on either side, attended by trim obliging waiters, and everything else equally inviting, and fully justifying our friend's previous good report. 'Roast Lamb,' 'Roast Beef,' 'Boiled Beef,' 'Beefsteak Pie,' and—— 'Thanks—plates for four of the first, with the various &c., and four tankards of stout.' 'Yes, sir'—and away vanishes our excellent friend, the waiter, to the unknown regions where cook holds sway and reigns supreme, only to return in less time than it takes to record the fact, with all that was calculated to make us content and comfortable. . . . We enjoyed one of the pleasantest afternoons it has been


Special Days for
Special Dishes.
Ye Winter Fare.
Mondays: at 12.30 Irish Stew.
at 6 Stewed Steaks.
Tuesdays: at 12.30 Boiled Beef, etc.
at 6 Irish Stew.
at 6.30 Marrow Bones.
Wednesdays: Ye famous Rumpsteak, Lark, Oyster, Kidney and Mushroom Puddings, served at 1 and 6.30.
Thursdays: at 12.30 Stewed Steak.
at 6 Irish Stew.
at 6.30 Marrow Bones.
Fridays: at 12.30 Irish Stew.
at 6 Brine and Onions.
Baked Potatoes.
Saturdays: Ye Pudding, at 1.30 and 6.
Ye Ordinary Fare.
Mutton Chops. Rump Steaks. Pork Chops.
Kidneys Sausages. Stewed Cheshire.
Duck Rabbits Poached Eggs, etc.
Open on Sundays: 1 to 3, and 6 till 10.
Wholesale Department and Entrance to Cellars: 145 Fleet Street.
Wines, Spirits, Beers, Cigars, Etc., of the Finest Quality.

our good fortune to participate in for many a day. Pleasant dinner—pleasant company—over a well-brewed bowl of palatably flavoured sipping punch, that engendered pleasant reflections on past assemblies and present associations—in the heart of dear old London—surely no alloy was possible in our midst, and nothing more was needed save the presence of some other far away friends to overflow the cup of pleasure at the 'Cheshire Cheese.' "

In the *World* of December 24, 1884, there is an able article on "The Old Chop Houses," in which the writer, going back on a memory of thirty years, says: "There was only one other house that excelled the old Cheshire Cheese for a steak, and that was the Blue Posts in Cork Street. At this admirable tavern, the steaks, cut a great deal thicker than is usual, were hung for days in a cool, roomy, draughty larder, and were never placed flat on a dish or plate till cooked. By consequence they were, *when* cooked, tender and juicy, as few London steaks now are. But as regards mutton chops, the Cheshire Cheese was unrivalled in London, or anywhere short of Barnsley, where a mutton chop is about a third part of a loin, not reckoning the chump end, and where this doubled or trebled chop is so taperly trimmed and freed from its superfluous fat, that when cooked, by a process which I take to be rather roasting than grilling, and served with the fillet under, like a sirloin of beef, it might, by virtue of its shapely plumpness, be taken for a roast partridge or grouse. The old landlord of the Cheshire Cheese was wont to plume himself mightily, as he had good cause for doing, on the quality and the proper cooking of his potatoes. No pains did he or his servants spare in keeping the

relays fresh and fresh—one under another, hot and hot. In very unfavourable seasons he would dissuade his customers from asking to be served with the tubers he could not confidently recommend, declaring in a tone at once regretful and apologetic that they were not fit food even for cattle. But these were exceptional days in the old life of the Cheshire Cheese. On revisiting the house lately I found it somewhat changed. One of the snug rooms, my favourite in the olden days, had been turned into an old-fashioned bar. The other retained its ancient character—the partitioned tables and bare deal seats, the old fireplace, heavy window sashes, low-beamed ceiling, and sawdusted floor. There, too, was Wageman's capitally painted portrait of Henry Todd, a former head waiter, who served in what was called the coffee-room from 1812 to 1827."

Under the head of "Public Refreshment," in Knight's "London," vol. iv. p. 314, are the following remarks:

"They are neither eating-houses nor taverns, nor do they belong to classes hereafter to be noticed. The solid food to be procured is chiefly in the form of a steak or a chop, with such small appendages as are necessary to form a meal.

"There are some of these houses which have been attended by one generation after another of guests, comprising merchants, bankers, and commercial men of every grade. The portrait of the founder or a favourite waiter may, perhaps, be seen over the fireplace in the best room; and the well-rubbed tables, chairs, and benches tell of industry oft repeated. Sometimes the older houses exhibit a waiter who has gone through his daily routine for half a century.

There is a dingy house in a court in Fleet Street where the chops and steaks are unrivalled. Who that has tasted there that impossible thing of private cookery, a *hot* mutton chop—a second brought when the first is despatched—has not pleasant recollections of the never-ending call to the cook of 'two muttons to follow'?"

In Charles Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities" (book ii. chap. 4), after the trial at the Old Bailey, the text proceeds:

"'I begin to think I *am* faint.'

"'Then why the devil don't you dine? I dined, myself, while those numskulls were deliberating which world you should belong to—this or some other. Let me show you the nearest tavern to dine well at.'

"Drawing his arm through his own, he took him down Ludgate Hill to Fleet Street, and so, up a covered way, into a tavern.[1] Here they were shown into a little room, where Charles Darnay was seen recruiting his strength with a good plain dinner and good wine; while Carton sat opposite to him at the same table, with his separate bottle of port before him, and his fully half-insolent manner upon him."

JEEMS PIPES ON THE "CHEESE"

"Jeems Pipes, of Pipesville," whose writings are much appreciated in the United States, in a letter dated from Regent Street, London, June 26, 1879, to the San Francisco *Daily Evening Post*, thus refers to the Cheshire Cheese:

"It really is impossible in this big city of four

[1] Indubitably the Cheshire Cheese.

million inhabitants to know what to write about; so many things come up to charm, to dazzle, to astonish and to talk of, that unless you make a note of it at once you either forget or it vanishes for ever from your memory. So I am now going to make a start with a little description of one or two of the old taverns or chop houses in this famous old town, commencing with

'THE OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE.'

This is, perhaps, at the present writing, one of the most popular of the old hostelries, and when you consider that for over two hundred years it has been in existence, and has been patronised by celebrities of every degree, rank, and station, and even royalty—for Charles II. ate a chop here with Nell Gwynne—and the genial landlord will actually show you the seats used by Dr. Samuel Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith, even to the marks on the wainscotted wall made by their greased wigs; the corner where the author of 'Pendennis' and 'The Newcomes' sat, or where Charles Dickens, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, and a host of others enjoyed their 'arf-and-'arf and toasted cheese. The tavern is situated up a little narrow passage called

'WINE OFFICE COURT.'

I don't think it can be more than three feet wide. On the right hand side of it is the entrance. Over the door is a glass lamp painted red, with the words 'Old Cheshire Cheese' on it. Now, what think you this out-of-the-way, 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' dark, dreary, uninviting-looking place would sell for to-day?

Why, about £40,000, or 200,000 dols. The present owner has occupied it nearly thirty years. The proprietor before him had possession of it for forty, and sold it to the present landlord for £20,000. So it continued to be a mine of wealth to him, and he has no idea of either selling, giving up, or retiring from his 'cosy retreat.' But, oh! what chops, what steaks, what cold lamb and salad, what beef-steak pudding you do get here! It is indeed a revelation! And, should you be permitted to ascend to the upper part of the building you will find the walls adorned with paintings of Rubens, Vandyke, and Moreland, a library of choice classic authors, articles of vertu, and other evidences of comfort and ease, where the proprietor dispenses his hospitality in the most genial manner; and, when I inform you that Mr. Moore (see page 140) is a vestryman and churchwarden of St. Bride's, will shortly become councilman, and probably Alderman and Lord Mayor, you will see that it is no common thing to be the landlord of the 'Cheshire Cheese.'"

THE LATE MR. MOORE

Mr. Moore did not live to attain the dignity which "Jeems Pipes" presaged. He died in 1886, loved and respected in his life, and deeply lamented at his death by the troops of friends who knew him

both in his private and business life. As a memento, which I am sure will be appreciated by everyone who enjoyed his acquaintance, I am enabled by the courtesy of the family to give this excellent repro-

duction of his portrait. Mr. "Charles" Moore, whose glance enlivens this page, succeeded his father, and still continues in the management of the Old "Cheese."

THE COOKERY CODE.

The following extract from a London letter in the *New York World* of September 14, 1884, will not be out of place here. The writer, it ought to be observed, is a lady. She says:

"London abounds in historic taverns, but of them

all none are more historic and interesting than the 'Cheese.' To eat a steak here is not to masticate fried cork, while the tankards of bitter ale, foaming and delicious, with which you wash down the steak are worth a long journey to enjoy. The folk-lore of this famous haunt is interesting, not alone to tavern-loving, but to general posterity, although as to a complete and detailed account of its very early history there is much of obscurity. While there are no positive proofs, there are authentic legends that Shakespeare spent many an idle hour at this place, because it was on his way to the Blackfriars Theatre, in Playhouse Yard, Ludgate Hill, of which he was so long a time absolute manager. In his time the play began at 1 P.M. and ended at 5 P.M., at which hour the wits of the town mustered forces in Fleet Street haunts.

"In modern times, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and now to-day that prince of diners and *bons vivants*, George Augustus Sala, have frequented the Cheshire Cheese and waxed eloquent over its comforts and subtle charms. Both Dickens and Thackeray knew how to appreciate a good inn, and, after singing the praises of the bill of fare, pay deserved compliments to the waiters. Men who serve the frequenters of the Cheshire grow grey in the service, and each boasts his own particular customers. Of the younger waiters all are most civil, and the young women at the bar are not only polite, but ladylike in manners and appearance.

"It is surprising how soon one gets used to the innovation of the feminine bar-tender, and it is not to be questioned that it is a good custom, productive of greater refinement among the male frequenters,

and, where the young women conduct themselves modestly, in no wise degrading to their minds or morals.

"It matters little what hour you select to visit 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese,' you will have plenty to amuse and instruct you, and always find the pretty barmaids in the bar room attentive and clever. The cutting of the rump steak and kidney pie is a spearing process performed by the proprietor, and often as many as three, even four waiters are needed to lift the huge smoking hot pie to the centre table, while often from thirty to sixty hungry men wait at the various tables for a triangle of this toothsome viand. Take my word for it, you will have a great desire for a second help, and even though, like myself, you are a petticoat wearer, no one will annoy you or even look surprised at your devoting an evening among the odd masculine characters nightly frequenting 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese.'"

The writer of the above description pays a well-earned compliment to the "feminine bar-tender"—to adopt the American language for the moment; their courtesy is unfailing and their good-nature beyond praise. A word might even be insinuated here in favour of all the employés, from the bar-boy up—perhaps their attentions are stimulated by the expectation of stray coppers. A funny custom should be noted here: the boy, whatever name was bestowed on him at baptism, is always "Charles"; the porter is "George"; and the second waiter is always "James." This is invariable, and I have seen a youth proceed from Charles through the stages of George and James, until he arrived at Tom, which last, strange to say, was his own name. The head waiter is

allowed to bear his own name, but the others must wear the names attached to their positions. This sort of thing is, after all, nothing new, for Shakespeare in "King John" probably gave the "Cheese" the cue thus:

> For if his name be George, I'll call him Peter,
> For new-made honour doth forget men's names.

In an article, long and eloquent, written by Mr. W. Outram Tristram, and delightfully illumed by the pencil of Mr. Herbert Railton, the *English Illustrated Magazine* of December 1889 gives, under the title of "A Storied Tavern," a most interesting account of this old house.

"Here," says the writer, "is no home for kickshaws and cigarettes. From this kitchen comes no sample of fashionable culinary art, that 'art with poisonous honey stolen from France.' Nothing of that kind obtains at the Cheshire Cheese. Here the narrowed kingdom lies of point steaks turned to a second and served hissing on plates supernaturally hot, of chops gargantuan in size and inimitable in tenderness and flavour, of cheese bubbling sympathetically in tiny tins, of floury potatoes properly cooked, of tankards of bitter beer, of extra creaming stout, of a rump-steak and oyster pudding served on Saturdays only,[1] and so much the specialty of the house, that I must deal with it hereafter. All smacks here of that England of solid comfort and solid plenty.

"There is a collection of useful

IMPLEMENTS OF INEBRIETY

in the bar of the Cheshire Cheese, which brings the

[1] On Wednesdays as well, as the menu on p. 110 proves.

place's past more vividly, perhaps, before one than any view of its sanded floors, low ceilings, or quaint staircase, disappearing suddenly from the entrance passage in formal but inviting bend.

. . . . . .

"Of its great guests in the past a list might be made, to judge from suggestions given me, equalling in length some of those amazing petitions which are offered on stray occasions to the consideration of an astounded House of Commons. The catalogue of the ships would be a comedy to it. For it must be remembered that the 'Cheese' has stood where it now stands for considerably over 200 years (three centuries is claimed for it by its more ardent devotees), and situate as it is in what has been always more or less a literary quarter of London, its sanded floors have been trod no doubt in all periods by distinguished literary feet. But to suggest that

SHAKESPEARE

ate here is, I think, a mistake. I have no doubt that he may have done so,

MAY HAVE STROLLED IN FOR A CHOP

in the intervals of rehearsing some masterpiece at the Blackfriars Theatre in Playhouse Yard; but so many great men have feasted here after him, that as a feeder his impression is faint. The belief, too, that the left-hand dining-room was in Herrick's mind when he apostrophised Rare Ben Jonson in lines that most people know by heart, is founded, I fear, on a corrupt reading of a famous passage, though the 'Cheese' in this

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON

(From an old engraving)

instance may be perhaps allowed the benefit of a doubt.[1]

"But with these doubtful celebrities subtracted, the house's roll of famous visitors remains sufficiently full. Voltaire was certainly here; Bolingbroke in this place cracked many a bottle of Burgundy; and Congreve's wit flashed wine-inspired, while Pope, sickly and intolerant of tobacco-smoke, suffered under these low roofs I doubt not many a headache. But it is of its distinguished visitors of later days that the Cheshire Cheese as it now stands reminds one most fully. Johnson, Garrick, Goldsmith, and Chatterton were undoubted frequenters. Many a time the great Samuel, turning heavily in his accustomed seat, and beset by some pert sailing pinnace, brought, like a galleon manœuvring, his ponderous artillery to bear. Goldsmith lived at No. 6 Wine Office Court, where he wrote or partly wrote the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' his

[1] In the first edition of this book the allusion to the famous passage runs in this wise: "Was it not in that left-hand room, entering from Wine Office Court, that Herrick thus apostrophised Rare Ben Jonson?—

'Ah, Ben!
Say how or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts,
Made at the Sun,
The CHEESE, the Triple Tun;
Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad?
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.'

"In some cases I find," says Mr. Reid, "'The Dog' is printed instead of 'The Cheese'; but I feel convinced that 'The Cheese,' being opposite the Triple Tun, or Three Tuns, is the house which Herrick meant."

flagging inspiration possibly gaining assistance from the tavern's famed Madeira.

"His (Dr. Johnson's) frequent, nay, nightly visits here are matters of history, and have been vouched for on

AUTHORITY BEYOND DISPUTE.

The time is not so far distant when old frequenters to the house were to be found who had drunk and eaten with men whom Johnson had conversationally annihilated, and who recalled the circumstance with an extreme clearness of recollection. A recollection this which joined the record of two generations of the tavern's great visitors. And the second generation offered names not unworthy to compare with the first, such notabilities as these figuring in the list: Dickens, Thackeray, Douglas Jerrold, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Tom Taylor, John Forster, Sir Alexander Cockburn, Professor Aytoun, Tom Hood, Andrew Halliday, and Charles Mathews.

"That the future of such an historic tavern as this Cheshire Cheese is safe, is a hope reasonably to be relied upon. Its *clientèle* is compact and faithful; its sequestered site, out of any possible main line of improvement, guarantees it against the deplorable fate which overtook its great rival and prototype. The Cock perished to make way for a more imposing structure, a fact which posterity may have cause to dwell upon. No further such improvements, we trust, are meditated in this part of Fleet Street. Long may the ripe Old Cheshire Cheese stand! In its independence and simplicity, in the flavour of the fireside which lurks about it, it is symbolical of the best and strongest side of our hospitable life. No false note of

entertainment rings here. In an age of imitations transplanted to an uncongenial soil this old house glories in its originality still. It is a tavern and not a restaurant. It is English."

Miss Sarah Morton, a special correspondent of the *Illustrated Buffalo Express* (N.Y.), gives in her paper, February 15, 1891, an amusing report of her visit to the "Cheese." "It was," she says, "with slow and lingering steps that I emerged from a visit to the ghastly yet fascinating Tower of London, by the way of old St. Paul's Churchyard into Fleet Street, towards the 'Cheshire Cheese.' 'Twas the night of the beef-steak pudding, a delicacy served only twice a week, and in precisely the same way that it has been served in this very place for 200 years.

"Women have been known to penetrate into this ancient resort for famous men, just to see the place and wonder at the impressions left on the wall by the big-wigs of England's geniuses of the olden time, but to eat—never. I was resolved, however, that for once at least a woman should dine on beef-steak pudding at the Cheshire Cheese. A timid knock at the door was quickly responded to by an appallingly dignified personage, who said, 'Certainly, come in, come in.'

. . . . . .

"One feels just like sidling into an old-fashioned church pew, for the three tables on the left, each accommodating six persons, are provided with high-backed benches black with age.

"'Will you wait for the pudding?' asks the Imposing Personage.

"'What time will it come on?' I diffidently query.

"'Six o'clock to the minute,' was the answer.

"'I will wait,' I replied, and again I was left alone to continue my observations.

"Over on the broad window seat is something under glass in a gilt frame. It is a most glowing description of the glories of 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese,' written by Jeems Pipes of Pipesville.

"How I wish someone would tell me who that man is who has come to the pudding once every year for forty years, and always sits in the same seat. I have an uncomfortable conviction that the place I have chosen belongs to him, as I hear him utter to his companion: 'Must be an American reporter—fine example of American enterprise!' There comes a well-known *Times* writer, who takes the Goldsmith's corner to himself, remarking—'The last time I came to the pudding I was ill for three days, but the temptation is irresistible to try it again.'

"One at the next table utters—'Well, my sister has never dared to come in here, but has wanted to all her life, and now she shall. She will know how to enjoy it!'

"Every seat is occupied.

"'Tis just six.

"The door swings slowly open. A huge, round white ball is borne aloft, high above the head of The Personage, who enters with slow and stately tread, followed in single file by six serious-faced attendants. The salver is tenderly lowered, and rests upon the table. Every eye is fixed upon it. The room is pervaded with perfect hush.

"The Personage solemnly receives a big spoon and knife from his first gentleman in waiting. The fateful moment has arrived. The pastry is broken. The gravy gently oozes over it.

"The Personage gravely approaches me and apologises for not serving me first, but 'really the middle portion will be safer for you,' he explained.

"The plates of the others were heaped upon. My time has come. There is my big dinner plate piled high with—what on earth! Birds! yes, tiny bits of birds, skylarks, kidneys, strips of beef just smothered in pastry like sea-foam, and dark brown gravy, steaming with fragrance, as seasoning.

"I arose to the exigencies of the occasion. A vision of the six-footer made ill for three days had no terrors for me. He had swallowed one plateful, and sent for another already.

"'Half-and-half'—British bitter and stout—in old-time pewter mugs was brought; out of deference to my sex, I suppose, a glass tumbler was placed before me, but I scorned to use it. Didn't Thackeray say it was worth a year's absence in far-away countries to realise the joy that filled one's soul upon returning to old England and quaffing her bitter from a pewter mug?

"Then came stewed cheese, on the thin shaving of crisp, golden toast in hot silver saucers—so hot that the cheese was of the substance of thick cream, the flavour of purple pansies and red raspberries commingled,

"There were only 400 skylarks put into the pudding made for the Prince of Wales at the banquet of the Forth Bridge opening in Edinburgh. How many thousands of the 'blithe spirits' have been put into the Cheshire Cheese pudding for 200 years?

"Shades of Shelley and Keats!

"The *Times* writer begins to smoke. My *vis-à-vis* asks if it will annoy me if he does likewise, and I

answer briefly that my only annoyance consists in not being one of the sex to whom such a treat just puts the dot of the I."

The *Globe* of January 15, 1884, alluding to the reported burning down of the Cheshire Cheese, remarked:

"The consternation exhibited by the Knights of the Temple a few days ago, when it was reported that their favourite tavern, the Cheshire Cheese, in Wine Office Court, had been destroyed by fire, has prompted research into the history of some of these ancient resorts, which are, it is to be feared, disappearing daily before the more splendid hotels now rising up everywhere in town. The destruction of this tavern would, indeed, have been a serious calamity to the inhabitants of the dusky purlieus of the law. Thence arrive the famous lark puddings when they give a little dinner in their snug chambers. For years, since the beginning of the century at all events, it has been famous. Even Peter Cunningham does not give the date of its foundation, but the author of the 'Epicure's Almanac,' of the date of 1815, thus writes of it: 'The first house on the right is the Cheshire Cheese, kept in high order by Mr. John Calton, who now, as host, reposes from his labours as waiter, which office he, for many years, filled in this house with amazing dexterity and precision, to the universal satisfaction of all-comers. Customers who have long used the house meet, of course, with greater attention than strangers. The moment you enter you give your order to the waiter; he calls to the cook above with the voice of a Stentor. So great is the afflux of diners to the house between noon and six in the evening, that many persons find it convenient

to call and order their dinner an hour or two beforehand, go out to transact business, and then, on returning, their dinner is instantly served up smoking, and their porter foaming. The brandy, rum, and rack—vulgarly called gin—of this house are genuine; so is the wine.' This is, in a few words, an excellent description of the old taverns and their comforts."

In *Society*, a series of articles was devoted to the description of famous restaurants and of the fare to be enjoyed within their walls. The writer, a brilliant Scots-Irishman, long an intimate of the "Cheese," devotes not the least piquant of his descriptions to that immortal house. He writes: "Christopher North chopped here, and has recorded his high opinion of its kitchen and its cellar. I fancy, however, that it was about the early *Punch* period that its real connection with journalism was ratified and the union consummated. Shirley Brooks has written pleasantly about it, Albert Smith has chaffed it, Edmund Yates has embalmed it in his 'Reminiscences,' and I have always had an idea that the Fleet Street chop-house in which poor Sydney Carton is found sitting in a semi-drunken condition is the Cheshire Cheese. Dickens, at all events, knew this place well, nor was it likely to escape a use of this sort. Mr. George Augustus Sala was a constant customer."

Then follows the inevitable description of the pudding, which we may on this occasion spare the reader.

The *Freemason's Chronicle*, of June 5, 1886, in reviewing an earlier edition of this little book, says:

"The praises of Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, one of the most antiquated, and yet the most favourite, resorts in the city of London, have been sung by historians and poets through the whole of the last cen-

tury, and quaint stories have been handed down to us of scenes and incidents that have from time to time been enacted within the age-begrimed walls of this historic 'chop-house.' In these days of progress, when the links connecting us with the bygone history of Old London are being snapped one by one, and once familiar landmarks are being improved off the face of the City by modern innovations, it is refreshing to be able to sit down and con over the sayings and doings of eminent men who have left 'footprints on the sands of Time,' and whose names are immortalised in literature and song. This little volume brings us *tête-à-tête* with such sturdy intellects as those of Dr. Johnson, Boswell, Reynolds, Goldsmith, Burke, and a host of other 'men of the time,' who in their periods of leisure sought ease and refreshment at the 'Cheese,' and set the tables often in a roar with their pungent criticisms and flights of mirth and satire.

"It is because the 'Cheese' retains its own historic stamp that legal, literary, and professional men 'most do congregate' there, and linger about its precincts with a sense of homeliness which attaches to no other hotel or restaurant in the City. Strange as may be the tales of old fogies who have reminiscences of the 'Cheese' for half a century or more, the traits so racily portrayed in the little volume before us carry back the history of ye olde tavern to still more interesting periods, when Shakespeare was a frequent looker-in, as he wended his way to, or returned from, the Blackfriars Theatre in Playhouse Yard; when

'CHARLES II. ATE A CHOP HERE

with Nell Gwynne;' while you can now have pointed

out to you the seats used by Dr. Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, even to the marks on the wainscotted walls made by their greased wigs; the corner where the author of 'Pendennis' and the 'Newcomes' sat; or where Charles Dickens, Mark Lemon, Shirley Brooks, Douglas Jerrold, John Leech, and a host of others enjoyed their 'arf-and-'arf and toasted cheese. These recollections impart a flavour to the quaint old rendezvous such as cannot possibly be acquired by any modern tavern or restaurant, however gaudy and glittering may be their internal embellishments; for, like old paintings and old wine, the 'Cheese' improves by keeping. The 'Cheese' has still its *habitués*, and on Saturday there is the famous rump-steak pudding, which draws a large attendance, for it is considered that you may search the wide world round without matching that succulent delicacy. Although we miss the genial form and face of the late Moore, whose prerogative it was to preside over this *chef-d'œuvre* of the culinary art, yet his place is filled by a worthy scion of the race, and the company, if not so garrulous or so boisterous as of yore, is still permeated by a sense of deep and affectionate loyalty to the 'old shop.'"

"There is hardly a place on the civilised earth," says the *Bar Journal* of February 27, 1892, "where two or three cultured Englishmen are gathered together that the 'Cheshire Cheese' is not a household word. Whether it be on the inhospitable prairies of New Mexico, the luxuriantly vegetated cattle ranches of Montana, or the mammoth wheat fields of Dakota, the fiery fields of India, the burning waste of Central Africa or its fever-stricken coasts, in all these places the exiled Englishman smokes his pipe, passes round the local

diluted form of alcohol which is the current drink, and talks of home and home comforts, and, it is safe to

THE WAY OUT—THREE FALCON COURT

say, 'The dear old Cheshire Cheese' is often lovingly spoken of. The feature about the old place is that it

is very nearly, if not absolutely, the last of the old taverns, and looks and is conducted to-day precisely as it has been for any time during the last hundred years."

The *Globe* of September 23, 1887, says: "London itself bristles with associations of the great dead. The toil and moil of Fleet Street has tired you. Then turn up Wine Office Court and enter the Cheshire Cheese, where you may sit in the same seat, perchance drink out of the same glass, and if, like poor Oliver, you still ask for more, it is possible to rest your head on the identical spot of grease that Johnson's wig provoked on the bare wall."

CHAPTER XIII[1]

"AN EATING-HOUSE FOR GOODLY FARE"

"JUST as it was two hundred years ago, do you say?"

"It was old in 1725. A handbook of London published at that date catalogues it as 'Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese Tavern, near ye Flete Prison, an Eating-House for goodly fare.' You see it now just as it was then. That is Dr. Samuel Johnson's corner over there. Goldsmith sat at his left hand. Goldsmith's lodgings were just across the street. He wrote the 'Vicar of Wakefield' in them. I'll show you his grave in the Temple Churchyard, when we go out. That is, unless I can persuade you to stay here to luncheon. It will be something to remember, I assure you."

The intonation is persuasive and a little anxious. The speaker casts a deprecating smile at the trio of fashionably attired women he is escorting. The one directly addressed gathers up her black satin skirt from the sawdusty floor, includes the appointments and inmates of the room in one sweeping, shuddering

[1] Taken (by permission of Messrs. Putnam's Sons) from Marian Harland's *Where Ghosts Walk*.

glance, and says hastily,—"O *no*! thank you *ever* so much, but I really couldn't *think* of it!"

Nobody, excepting ourselves, looks at the party that has the effect of taking up all the spare room in the place, and making the ceiling lower, the wainscotted walls more dingy, in a way peculiar to over-dressed Americans. The *cicerone* is their countryman, but of a different stamp. There is intelligent regret in his backward glance as he follows the disdainful bevy in their retreat. We get a glimpse of them through a window, when they emerge from the shabby doorway. They are still gathering their skirts about them, and pick their way gingerly upon their boot-tips over the wet stones of Wine Office Court.

So far as we can see, the flutter and bustle produced by their hurried round of inspection is confined to ourselves, although every word uttered was audible from wall to wall. The ruffled stillness subsides with their departure, as stagnant waters regain placidity after the plashing of a stone. We exchange congratulatory smiles and snuggle down contentedly in our nook across the aisle from the Johnsonian corner. Then, the encompassing atmosphere begins to take effect. We grow dreamily reminiscent, patiently anticipative.

This expedition to the one coffee-house in London that has withstood the surge of "modern improvements" directed against building and management for more than two hundred years, is the "larkiest" thing we have done in our wanderings. Before coming, it looked to us like a bit of Bohemian adventure verging upon the poisonous sweetness of stolen waters, the touch of iniquity which, the witty Frenchwoman said, was all that was needed to make

her vanilla ice perfectly delicious. We foresaw a fair measure of novel excitement, with a certain background of discomfort. As the spirit of the place and the times gains possession of us, the "lark" becomes more than decorous. It is dignified, and a duty we owe to the *manes* of the greater than ourselves who resorted hither in the dim and reverend Past.

JOHNSON'S SEAT, WITH PORTRAIT. "OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE"
By Seymour Lucas, R.A.

The coffee-house—or chop-house—is smaller than we expected to find it. There is a bar on the other side of the hall, with a sustained reputation of its very own, and the supper-rooms above stairs could tell gay tales of dead-and-gone revelries, if the dumb walls were phonographic. This, the chief resort of

customers that have given "The Cheshire Cheese" world-wide renown, is not more than twenty feet long and perhaps fifteen feet in width. There are ten tables, each with seats for six upon hard benches that are made fast to the floor. Breast-high partitions between the tables make compartments like the square family pews seen in old churches. Massive oaken beams, embrowned by smoke and centuries, cross the ceiling. One compartment is further secluded by a dingy curtain, hung from a rod set a foot or more above the top of the board partition, and is known as "the cosey corner."

Dr. Johnson's nook has wall-benches on two sides; a third side is made by the projecting chimney, the table filling the fourth that faces the room. Johnson's portrait hangs above his bench. A brass plate is let into the wall, testifying that this was "the favourite seat of Dr. Samuel Johnson, *Born September* 18, 1709. *Died December* 13, 1784." Beneath a pompous, eulogistic sentence we read one more pithy and interesting:

"No, sir! there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness has been produced, as by a good tavern."—JOHNSON.

The round spots of darker brown upon the wainscot were made, it is said, by the loll of Johnson's greasy wig and the restless rubbing of Goldsmith's head, as they hobnobbed daily over roast, steak, and home-brewed ale. The sawdust on the floor is an indifferent substitute for the sand that formerly coated and protected it. Midway between door and chimney is an iron umbrella-rack, the box-bottom of which is filled with sawdust. It has especial fascination for us, somehow. Johnson's

umbrella, that must have been big and baggy, and Goldsmith's, that, most likely, had a broken rib and a slit or two (if he owned one at all), leaned against that frame times without number. We easily conjure up the bear-like roll and ponderous tread of the great lexicographer up the aisle, until he flings himself upon the creaking bench, poor Oliver following with his dog-trot and his bright, wistful eyes. We hope and believe that, when he had not what "Young America" calls "the price of a dinner" in his pocket, he dined at Bruin's expense.

Charles II. consistently defied the proprieties and amused his royal self by bringing Nell Gwynne here to sup one night after the play. Discarding as apocryphal the tale that Shakespeare used to take his chop and cup of sack at one of these tables while his plays were "on" at the Blackfriars Theatre, we yet remind one another, whisperingly, that Robert Herrick wrote to Ben Jonson of

> "these lyric feasts
> Made at The Sun,
> THE CHEESE, the Triple Tun";

that "the marvellous Boy," Chatterton, loafed into the classic precincts to warm his famishing body, and to bask his hungrier soul and heart in the blaze of the congregated wits. Alexander Pope, Alfred Tennyson, David Garrick, John Leech, Thomas Hood, Charles Dickens, Edmund Burke, Thackeray, Voltaire, Christopher North, Charles Mathews, Douglas Jerrold, John Forster, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sir Joshua Reynolds,—what care we how we violate synchronisms in our breathless enumeration of a few of the shining host that have sat upon these hard benches, eaten from these clumsy tables, and made

the smoke-dyed rafters ring with debate and laughter? Epigrams were born in the old eating-house as butterflies are evolved from cocoons by sunshine and summer airs. A catalogue of the noted *bons mots* here uttered for the first time would fill a fair-sized volume.

We have abundant leisure for memory and for thought, for, mistaking the hour at which THE PUDDING, the event of the day, would be served, we have forty-five minutes upon our hands. The waiter who spreads our white cloth and sets in array the willow-pattern plates, the caster, salt-cellars, cutlery, and pewter tankards, informs us in the husky sub-tone that befits hour and scene, that "IT will not be down until 'arf-parst one, to the minnit."

"The kitchen is upstairs, then?"

"As it halways 'as been, sir. And IT 'as been done to a turn at 'arf-parst one o'clock to the minnit for a 'undred years and more."

As the minutes pass, the room fills. No questions are asked; no orders are given. For a while, the hum of voices from the bar trickles into the silence. This is hushed presently, and the five or six men who have loitered there enter with the careful step of church-comers to take the few remaining vacant seats, Watches are furtively consulted when the minutes have dwindled into seconds. Still there is no exhibition of restlessness. Verily, these English know how to wait for what they are sure of getting. In the hundred years and more they have learned that IT is not to be hurried.

Four waiters appear, laden with immense piles of hot plates of generous amplitude, and deposit them upon a table near the door. Two respectable and

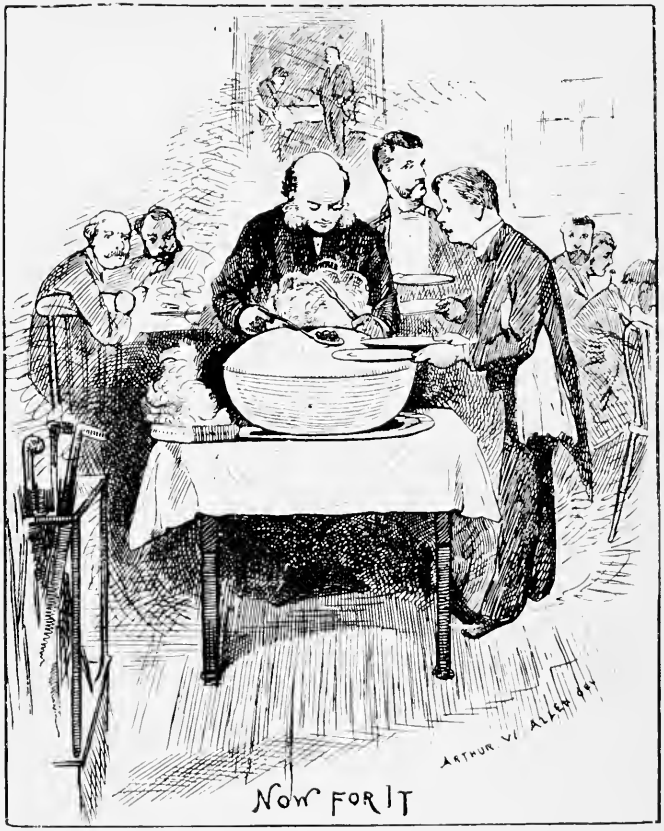
ruddy Britons in the box adjoining ours take off the hats they had not thought it worth while to remove out of respect to their fellow-guests. Upon the heels of the plate-bearers march two men with four covered tureens of gravy. These flank the hot plates, leaving the upper end of the board clear. Then, a man walks in quietly and takes his stand before the vacant space. From his dress-coat he might be a Chief Butler. From his handsome face, clean-shaven but for a mustache, he might be an educated gentleman. His deportment is that of a High Priest, and the table is his altar. An attendant hands him a glittering knife and a fork.

Our fingers and toes tingle ; electric shivers play up and down our spines in the interval of perhaps thirty seconds that elapses before there looms up in the doorway a big waiter, bearing aloft upon a pair of muscular arms—

THE PUDDING.

He moves with judicious circumspection. We recall, with a pang as swift and keen as a jumping toothache, that once—a generation or so ago—a hapless predecessor of the Hercules tripped upon the threshold in the supreme moment of the Occasion, and let the Pudding fall.

It is safe to-day, albeit the table actually groans as it is set down. The gleaming carver is raised—not with a flourish, as it might be in the hands of a meaner artist—and sinks into the full bosom, swelling above the rim of the mammoth basin. Slow clouds of incense rise and soon pervade the remotest corners. The phlegmatic Britons about us do not turn a hair. Yet their mouths must be watering behind their



NOW FOR IT

clenched teeth. Distribution, like carving, is regulated by immutable rules. Each expectant must take his turn. Every plate is heaped, yet the only accompaniment of the Pudding is great potatoes, smoking hot, that crumble into meal at a touch.

If there can be two supreme moments in the gastronomic Function at which we are assisting, the second is that in which we taste, for the first time, the Dish, the fame of which has followed the British drum-beat around the world.

It signifies next to nothing to say that the crust, three inches thick, is as light as a sponge and as tender as the heart of a newly made widower; that beneath this crust—embalmed in, and informed by, a brown gravy of ineffable and indescribable spiciness and savouriness, and as rich and smooth as Alderney cream—are cubes of juicy beefsteak and minute morsels of marrow, larks, mushrooms, kidneys, and oysters, each, by some miracle of culinary genius, retaining its distinctive flavour, yet entering into and facilitating the accomplishment of a harmonious Whole.

Having satisfied ourselves as to these particulars by critical analysis, after the ecstasy of fruition is somewhat dulled by indulgence, we are as far as ever from grasping the mystery of proportion and concoction.

Custom, audited by common-sense, ordains that THE PUDDING be washed down by "a pint of bitter." Which, being interpreted, is the mildest and mellowest of "brown October ale." It has consorted with the savoury Wonder for so long that divorce would be an outrage.

"Stewed Cheshire" is the one and only other

course prescribed by tradition and appetite when the second—or mayhap the third—help of pudding has been declined—or, what is more likely, eaten. "Stewed Cheshire" is a kind of glorified Welsh rarebit, served in the square, shallow tins in which it is cooked, and garnished with sippets of delicately coloured toast.

On the way out, we halt at the altar. The still steaming basin is three-quarters empty. In case some abnormally capacious customer should accept a fourth portion, the High Priest still holds the knife, but lightly, and resting, as it were, upon his arms. Rashly, being ignorant of his real rank, we accost him civilly, extol the Pudding, and inquire further into the antecedents thereof. He is courteous, and, for a High Priest, communicative.

The basin, or bowl, in which the pudding is cooked, stands eighteen inches high, and is twenty inches in diameter at the brim. It holds one hundred pounds of mixture, including the crust, and is boiled twenty hours. The receipt is a state secret, and the landlord keeps the formula in his safe when not using it. The Pudding is compounded in a locked room, then committed for boiling to a confidential cook.

"The Cheese," as the ancient hostelry is familiarly termed by affectionate *habitués*, has been in the Moore family for several generations, descending, like a dukedom, from father to son. This we had heard prior to our visit. Not until we were quitting the storied spot did we discover that the suave High Functionary with whom we had been talking was Mr. Charles Moore, the present proprietor. He is a Churchwarden and a Common Councilman, with prospects of the Lord Mayoralty, should he care

to have the office, a man of rare intelligence and culture.

The venerable eating-house has been a mine of wealth to his canny forbears and to himself. In nothing have they proved themselves more canny than in resisting what their revered Johnson anathematised as "the fury of innovation" that has transformed other chop-houses, The Mitre, The Dog, The Tun, and The Cock—"most ancient of Taverns," into nineteenth century restaurants, bereft of quaintness and tradition by new methods and new men, and has substituted cheap replicas for a Unique.

CHAPTER XIV

THE "CHESHIRE CHEESE" IN LITERATURE

"THE FIELD OF ART" ("Scribner"), Feb. 1897:

"There is no date recorded of the building of the 'Cheese,' but for over two hundred years it has been in existence, and has been patronised by celebrities of every degree. Charles II. ate a chop there with Nell Gwynne. A brass tablet in one corner informs you that this was the favourite seat of Dr. Samuel Johnson, and the panelling immediately below is quite polished by the heads of generations of the faithful who have held it an honour to occupy the seat. . . .

"Along Fleet Street nineteenth century humanity rushes in throngs, feverishly intent on the main chance. But now and again units from the mass fall out and disappear into a little doorway, so unobtrusive in its character as to be easily passed by strangers in search of it. A small passageway, a bit of court, and one enters the Old Cheshire Cheese, treading in the footsteps of generations of wits and philosophers. A wit the visitor may not be, but he is certain to be the other in one way or another, and his purpose in coming here can have little in common with the hurly-burly he has but just left out there in Fleet Street. The tide of affairs has left him stranded on an oasis of peculiar charm—a low-ceilinged room, brown as an old meerschaum, heavily raftered, and carrying to the sensitive

nostril the scent of ages, the indescribable aroma inseparable from these haunts of geniality: the merry glow of the fire in the old grate, flirting tiny flames upwards that caress the steaming, singing kettle hanging just above. The old copper scuttle glints with the fitful gleams upon its burnished pudgy sides; the floor spread abundantly with sawdust softens the sounds of footfalls. The white tablecloths make the note of tidiness relieving the prevailing low tone of the room. . . . The silk hats and trousers of modern London almost seem out of harmony with the cosy quaintness of their environment; but smalls, and buckles, and cocked hats pass away, and architecture survives the fashions and persons of its creators.

"The waiter before one looks very different from the picture on the wall of his one-time predecessor, but, what is important, the spirit remains the same. In an atmosphere of good fellowship the frequenters of to-day converse over their chop and pint, or perhaps before the cheery fire nurse their knees in reflective mood, drawn together by the same instincts that animated this delightful company of old.

"But who among these, if appealed to, could define the æsthetic charm of the place? Is it the rich colouring of yellow, and old gold, and silver, and brown, the traditions mellow as old wine that sweeten the atmosphere, the satisfaction of the senses, the pure contentment of soul, the pause by the way for the furbishing of one's mental apparel? It is all these and more that make the Old Cheshire Cheese a delight, and, when one has gone, leaves of its high-backed benches and polished tables, its general aspect of warm and cheery hospitality, a glowing memory."

"CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL," Saturday, June 2, 1883, after speaking of an imaginary journey from Temple Bar eastward, thus describes the "Cheese":

"There is another old City tavern where Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith often sat together over a snug dinner, a tavern in Wine Office Court called the Old Cheshire Cheese.

Passing along Fleet Street and glancing up this court, those magic words seem to take up all the space in the distance as completely as though they were being glanced at through a telescope, and if you follow the instincts of your nature you will dive down the telescope towards the attractive lamp above the door, and enter the tavern. The customary pint of stout in an old pewter will be placed before you, if your taste lies that way; and when you have finished your chop, or steak, or pudding as the case may be, there will follow that speciality for which the Cheshire Cheese is principally noted, a dish of bubbling and blistering cheese which comes up scorching in an apparatus, resembling a tin of Everton toffee in size and shape.

"It was the same when frequented by Johnson and Goldsmith, and their favourite seats in the north-east corner of the window are still pointed out. Nothing is changed—except the waiters, in course of nature—in this conservative and cosy tavern. If Goldsmith did not actually write parts of the 'Vicar of Wakefield' in that corner, he must have thought out more chapters than one while seated there. He lived in Wine Office Court, and here it is supposed the novel begun at Canonbury Tower was finished."

So much for "Chambers's." The "dish of bubbling and blistering cheese which comes up scorching in an apparatus" is good, very good.

"Picturesque London" (Percy Fitzgerald):

"Fleet Street, interesting in so many ways, is remarkable for the curious little courts and passages into which you make entry under small archways. These are Johnson's Court, Bolt Court, Racquet Court, and the like. But in Fleet Street there is one that is specially interesting. We can fancy the Doctor tramping up to his favourite tavern, the Cheshire Cheese.

"Passing into the dark alley known as Wine Office Court, we come to a narrow flagged passage, the house or wall on the other side quite close and excluding the light.

The 'Cheese' looks indeed a sort of dark den, an inferior public-house, its grimed windows like those of a shop, which we can look at from the passage. On entering, there is the little bar facing us, and always the essence of snugness and cosiness; to the right a small room, to the left a bigger one. This is the favourite tavern, with its dingy walls and sawdusted floor, a few benches put against the wall, and two or three plain tables of the rudest kind. The grill is heard hissing in some back region where the chop or small steak is being prepared; and it may be said *en passant* that the flavour and treatment of the chop and steak are quite different from those 'done' on the more pretentious grills which have lately sprung up. On the wall is the testimonial portrait of a rather bloated waiter—Todd, I think, by name—quite suggestive of the late Mr. Liston. He is holding up his corkscrew of office to an expectant guest, either in a warning or exultant way, as if he had extracted the cork in a masterly style. Underneath is an inscription that it was painted in 1812, to be hung up as an heirloom and handed down, having been executed under the reign of Dolamore, who then owned the place. Strange to say, the waiter of the Cheshire Cheese has been sung, like his brother at the Cock, but not by such a bard. There is a certain irreverence, but the parody is a good one:

> "Waiter at the Cheshire Cheese,
> Uncertain, gruff, and hard to please,
> When 'tuppence' smooths thy angry brow,
> A ministering angel thou!

"It has its *habitués*, and on Saturday there is a famous rump-steak pudding which draws a larger attendance, for it is considered that you may search the wide world round without matching that succulent delicacy. These great savoury meat puddings do not kindle the ardour of many persons, being rather strong for the stomachs of babes.

"Well, then, hither it was that Dr. Johnson used to repair. True, neither Boswell nor Hawkins, nor after them Mr. Croker, takes note of the circumstances, but there

were many things that escaped Mr. Croker, diligent as he was. There is, however, excellent evidence of the fact. A worthy solicitor named Jay—who is garrulous, but not unentertaining in a book of anecdotes which he has written—frequented the Cheshire Cheese for fifty years during which long tavern life he says, 'I have been interested in seeing young men when I first went there who afterwards married : then in seeing their sons dining there, and often their grandsons, and much gratified by observing that most of them succeeded well in life. This applies particularly to the barristers with whom I have so often dined when students, when barristers, and some who were afterwards judges.'"

Mr. Fitzgerald then goes on to quote from Jay the extract given, and concludes by saying, "Be that as it may, it is an interesting locality and a pleasing sign—the Old Cheshire Cheese, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, which will afford the present generation, it is hoped, for some time to come an opportunity of witnessing the kind of tavern in which our forefathers delighted to assemble for refreshment."

G. A. S. ("Twice Round the Clock: Six P.M.") (talking of the ancient Roman repasts) : "Better, I take it, a mutton chop at the Cheshire Cheese than those nasty ancient Roman repasts."

THE "GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE," April, 1895 ("A Six Days' Tour in London with a Pretty Cousin") :—

"We must take a glance at a tavern of the good old pattern close by, which has a regular pedigree and has had books written about it—the Cheshire Cheese to wit. We go up Wine Office Court and there it stands with its blinking windows and somewhat shaky walls. . . . Not so, Mr. Sylvanus Urban, the windows of the good old house may blink, but there is nothing shaky about the walls, they at all events are founded on a rock solid as the credit of the house. No wonder too, for it carries its two hundred years

or so bravely enough, and like its extinct neighbour, the Cock, witnessed the Plague and Fire. It is needless to say that the older Cheshire Cheese perished in the Fire of London, which stopped about a hundred yards west of Wine Office Court, just on the City side of St. Dunstan's Church. Here the floor is sanded—or rather sawdusted: here are boxes and rude tables; the chop is done on a gridiron before you, and there is a beef-steak pudding which delights epicures."

WALTER THORNBURY ("Old and New London"):

"Goldsmith appears to have resided at No. 6 Wine Office Court from 1760 to 1762. They still point out Johnson and Goldsmith's favourite seats in the north-east corner of the window of that cosy though utterly unpretentious tavern, the Cheshire Cheese in this court.

"It was while living in Wine Office Court that Goldsmith is supposed to have partly written that delightful novel, the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which he had begun at Canonbury Tower. We like to think that seated in the 'Cheese' he perhaps espied and listened to the worthy but credulous vicar and his gosling son attending to the profound theories of the learned and philosophic but shifty Mr. Jenkinson. We think now, by the windows, with a cross light upon his coarse Irish features and his round prominent brow, we see the watchful poet sit eyeing his prey, secretly enjoying the grandiloquence of the swindler and the admiration of the honest country parson."

"BENTLEY'S MISCELLANY," vol. v. 475, 1839, interesting as being the volume in which Dickens's "Oliver Twist," illustrated by George Cruikshank, appears:

"A few doors farther down, on the same side of the way and up a certain passage, is located an undeniable chop-house; its title the Cheshire Cheese. In a lucky hour was I conducted to this hidden retreat by an ardent worshipper of that rarely to be met with delicacy, a superlatively broiled and thoroughly hot mutton chop. Should the fancy stray

from mutton to pork at the aforesaid Cheshire Cheese, it will be gratified. The principal director and factotum of this secluded spot is one Ben, a perfect original in his way. He will tell you without the slightest apparent fear of contradiction that no house in London can vie with his establishment either in the quality or the dressing of his chops and in good truth the fellow is right. I had heard in my youth of things being done to a turn, but I never had ocular proof of the adage until I visited this self-satisfied knight of the gridiron. One abomination is permitted which cannot be sufficiently reprobated, and that is the early hour at which smoking is allowed. This postprandial indulgence commences as the clock strikes six, too soon by one hundred and twenty minutes. I know not an infliction more nauseating than being compelled to inhale the fumes of divers yards of clay and a dozen or so of *native* cigars during the process of mastication."

"All the Year Round," Sept. 9, 1871 :

"The Cheshire Cheese, that old-fashioned tavern of Wine Office Court, is connected by tradition with Goldsmith and Johnson as other Fleet Street was with Boswell and Johnson. In the low-ceilinged room, looking into two courts, with sawdust on the floor and the rude benches of a hundred years ago, they still point out the favourite nook of the two great men. Poor warm-hearted Oliver, who loved his fellow men though they laughed at his poverty, fine dress, and harmless vanity, must needs have frequented this hidden-away haunt. Dr. Johnson, it is certain, did."

Mr. Lewis Hough, in "Once a Week," Oct. 26, 1867 :

"The historical haunts of Fleet Street have a peculiar charm for those who are open to the influences of association. The bench may be hard, but Dr. Johnson has sat upon it ; the oak panelling is not luxurious to lean back against, but the periwigs of Steele and Addison have pressed it ; the little room may be dingy, but the peach-coloured garments of Goldsmith once lent it a temporary brilliancy. The ghosts

of wits and sages are gathered round the board. And then the cookery, though simple, is excellent of its sort. You demand a couple of mutton chops. 'Chop and follow' shouts the waiter, and presently the first is brought you perfectly cooked and hissing on the plate, and by the time you have finished it the second is ready. Where else will you get a steak so juicy, so tender? Where else do they understand how to cook a kidney on toast? The drink should be stout for the strong, bitter for the weak; and nowhere else in the world is such glorious beer to be tasted. That is a mystery; you may have the identical brew at your private residence, but it never possesses the same flavour.

"The Cock, immortalised by Tennyson, will live for ever in poetry, but the architects, alas! have decided that it shall vanish from the world of prose. But there is a favourite haunt of mine higher up in Fleet Street. There you can feast upon marrow bones. On Saturdays the *pièce de résistance* is a wonderful pudding compounded of steaks, oysters, kidneys, and other unknown delicacies; there is a smoking-room upstairs, where punch is served in an old-fashioned bowl, with glasses of the pattern in use in the last century.

THE CHEESE IN THE TIME OF JOHNSON

"'As soon as I enter the door of a tavern'—and many were the taverns whose doors the great Samuel entered—exclaimed Dr. Johnson from that tavern chair which he regarded as the throne of human felicity, 'I experience an oblivion of care and a freedom from solitude; when I am seated I find the master courteous' (courtesy is thus hereditary in the masters of the Cheshire Cheese) 'and the servants obsequious to my call, anxious to know and ready to supply my wants; wine then exhilarates my spirits and prompts me to free conversation and an interchange of discourse with those whom I most love: I dogmatise and am contradicted, and in this conflict of opinion and sentiments I delight.'

"One can picture to oneself Johnson when he had

entered and taken his favourite seat at the Cheshire Cheese, the fire blazing then as it blazes to-day, after the lapse of more than a century, in the mighty grate, and casting its flashes, as it casts them to-day, over the same oak-wainscotted walls, infusing a ruddier glow into the red curtains drawn across the windows, and dropping a deeper-dyed ruby into the drink that was meant for men. It requires no great flight of imagination, as one sits between the lights fronting the brass tablet in what is known to the old *habitués* of the Cheshire Cheese as the Board, to picture the Doctor in his sacred seat holding forth with all the pomposity of an eighteenth-century oracle, monopolising the conversation, except when Burke—which is not very often the case—has dropped in from the House of Commons to revisit his old friends: there with eyes reverentially fixed on Johnson, and drinking in every word the sage utters, sits Boswell, occasionally bringing down upon himself a gibe from the Doctor, much to the delight of poor Goldy, whom he affects to despise, but of whose influence with their chief he is excessively jealous: Noll himself, never quiet in his chair, venturing even to beard the doughty Doctor and appal him by the immortal answer to the question 'How many rump s(teaks) would reach to the moon, Doctor?'—these three are the regulars, and form the nucleus of the society. Occasionally one may fancy the giant Bennet Langton—for he is six feet six in his stockings—sitting with legs crossed in the background and casting in the flickering firelight shadows which look like some reanimated antediluvian, or his friend Beauclerk, the aristocrat of the party, who ventures even to gird at the Leviathan and chill poor Bozzy to the very bones.

"All this and much more one needs no very lively imagination to present to one's mind, and nowhere now but at the Cheshire Cheese can this be done. All the other tavern haunts which Johnson and his disciples frequented have passed away or been improved out of all semblance to the Johnson era; but the Cheese remains, within and without, the same as it did when Goldsmith reeled up the steps to his lodgings opposite the main entrance in Wine Office

Court, or Johnson rolled his huge bulk past it to the house in Gough Square, where his wife died in 1752 and the Dictionary was completed in 1755."

MR. PHILIP NORMAN, in the "Illustrated London News" for December, 1890, remarks, in his "Inns and Taverns of Old London":

"The faithful journey to the Cheshire Cheese firm in the belief that when Goldsmith lived hard by in Wine Office Court the two friends must have spent many an hour together in those panelled rooms and have sat on the seat assigned to them by tradition. Now that the Cock has quitted his original home, though under his former proprietor" (it must be remembered this was written in 1890, and does not hold at present—he crows gallantly over the way) "the Cheshire Cheese is unquestionably the most perfect specimen of an old-fashioned tavern in London."

JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON ("A Book About the Table," vol. ii. page 43):

"But ere we pass from beef to less majestic delicacies, let us render homage to the steak pudding, than which no goodlier fare can be found for a strong hungry man on a cold day. Rising from his pudding at the Cheshire Cheese, such a feaster is at a loss to say whether he should be most grateful for the tender steak, savoury oyster, seductive kidney, fascinating lark, rich gravy, ardent pepper, or delicate paste."

"SCRIBNER" ("In London with Dickens"), March, 1881:

"These noisy and nasty eating-houses" (in and about Chancery Lane) "are in striking contrast with the staid, old-fashioned taverns in the same neighbourhood, the Cheshire Cheese, etc."

"The tavern," says SIR WALTER BESANT (in "Fifty Years Ago"), "We can hardly understand how large a place it filled in the lives of our forefathers, who did not live scattered about in suburban villas, but over their shops and offices.

When business was over, all, of every class, repaired to the tavern. Dr. Johnson spent the evenings of his last years wholly at the tavern; the lawyer, the draper, the grocer, even the clergyman, all spent their evenings at the tavern, going home in time for supper with their families. The tavern was far more than a modern club, because the tavern atmosphere and the equality of all comers prevented the growth of artificial and conventional restraints. Something of the tavern life is left still in London, but not much. The Cheshire Cheese is a survival; the Cock, until recently, was another. And when one contrasts the cold and silent coffee-room of the new great club, where the men glare at each other, with the bright and cheerful tavern where every man talked with his neighbour, and the song went round, and the great kettle bubbled upon the hearth, one feels that civilisation has its losses."

With reference to Sir Walter's "even the clergyman" spending his evenings at a tavern, there are some among the old Cheeseites left who can remember the Ordinary of Newgate doing so at the Cheshire Cheese.

MARK LEMON ("Punch"):

"LINES WRITTEN AT THE 'CHEESE.'

"DEDICATED TO LOVELACE.

"Champagne will not a dinner make,
Nor caviare a meal.
Men gluttonous and rich may take
Those till they make them ill.
If I've potatoes to my chop,
And after chop have cheese,
Angels in Pond & Spiers's shops
Know no such luxuries."

MR. ROBERT ALLBUT, the well-known author of "The Tourist's Handbook to Switzerland," &c., in his "London Rambles *en Zigzag* with Charles Dickens," page 23, thus speaks of

YE OLDE CHESHIRE CHEESE.

"In the 'Tale of Two Cities,' book 2, chapter iv., we read that Charles Darnay, being acquitted of the charge of high treason on his trial at the Old Bailey, was persuaded by the young lawyer, Sydney Carton, to dine in his company thereafter.

"'Drawing his arm through his own he took him down Ludgate Hill to Fleet Street, and so up a covered way into a tavern. Here they were shown into a little room where Charles Darnay was seen recruiting his strength with a good plain dinner and good wine, while Carton sat opposite him at the same table, with his separate bottle of port before him and his fully half-insolent manner upon him.'

"This, of course, was the tavern intended, it having been a noted resort with literary and legal men for more than a century past. Here Dr. Johnson and Oliver Goldsmith frequently dined together in days gone by, gravely discoursing over their punch afterwards; and in more recent years Thackeray, Dickens, Jerrold, Sala, and others have been reckoned among the customary guests of the establishment."

THE "CHEESE" FIFTY YEARS AGO

THE "PUPPET SHOW," of August 26, 1848, a paper which, edited by Albert Smith, was meant to rival "Punch," but failed in the attempt, in the fourth of a series of articles headed "Remarks on Remarkable Dining Places," deals with the Cheshire Cheese. The famous Albion Tavern in Aldersgate Street—that house for the Court and Livery dinners of City Companies—is the subject of the first paper, and, oddly enough, of all the remarkable dining places remarked on in the "Puppet Show" just over half a century ago, the Albion and the Cheshire Cheese alone survive. Leaving out a few preliminary sentences, on which the writer plainly wishes to show that he is a Sir Oracle, and that when he opes his lips no dog should bark, we read this:

"After a contest of some years, Mr. Dolamore, the worthy proprietor of the Cheshire Cheese, yielded to the popular

clamour for bitter beer. One concession begets another, and the importation of sherry cobblers was soon afterwards demanded and obtained. Encouraged by these successes, we have ulterior intentions of causing the English language to be spoken at the establishment in question. The first time we ever entered it, a youth, whom we at the time believed to be insane, nearly frightened our wits out by screaming at the top of his voice: 'Cook, a single mut,' 'A single kid,' 'Two muts down together, one kid to follow thoroughly done.' We soon discovered that there was a peculiar language spoken at the Cheese, and we accordingly looked for a dictionary or an interpreter, when an old gentleman, who had been in the habit of dining there every day, except Sunday, for forty-nine years, informed us with a look of unmitigated contempt, that 'mut' was the Cheese for a mutton chop, and that 'kid' was translatable into English by the word kidney.

"The Cheshire Cheese is governed by a waiterocracy. The proprietor, who is two or three hosts in himself, seldom interferes, except by coming into one of the rooms and bowing at random to any of the visitors who may happen to be looking his way. But the waiters are tyrants. Nothing can be done except by their express permission; however, they are occasionally merciful, and that venerable old waiterocrat William has been even known to descend to a species of favouritism which permits him to carry newspapers under his coat for the especial gratification of those who happen, for the moment, to be basking in the sunshine of his favour. William would not for any earthly consideration allow a paper to be carried upstairs into the smoking room. He would feel that, after giving up that point, he might as well abolish the custom of handing bread on the point of a fork, as if to a bear on the top of a pole, and when the right of choice as to crust and crumb is once allowed to the visitor, instead of the selection being left to the waiter as at present, poor old William will die and have his portrait hung over the mantel-piece, as has been the fate of other waiters before him.

"We imagine that at one time political feeling ran very high among the Cheshire Cheeseites, for at present the habitual visitors separate themselves into two distinct bodies, and occupy two distinct rooms, one of which is adapted to the use of Whigs, while the other is suitable to the accommodation of Tories. Of course, the expressions 'Liberal' and 'Conservative' are far too new fangled for the persons of whom we are speaking. In this room you may read the 'Globe' and the 'Advertiser' (the 'Daily News' will not be taken in until it has been established a dozen years), in that you may grow sleepy over the 'Herald' or delighted with the 'Chronicle,' which, by-the-bye, was some months ago formally removed from the apartment where it had been seen daily for a tolerably large fraction of a century into the one in which it is at present visible. Some of its ancient readers were observed to shed tears on the occasion.

"Our readers will be able to form some opinion of the love for the antique possessed by the Cheshire Cheeseites when we inform them that the latter read the jokes in 'Punch,' and they will further be enabled to arrive at some idea of the injury which their absurd prejudices cause them, when we say that their pet establishment is one of the few that does not take in the 'Puppet Show.'

"In order to be consistent, Mr. Dolamore ought to keep all his port till it becomes watery, and all his bread till it gets stale. Let us hope, however, that as long as he keeps the Cheshire Cheese it will in no way become decayed."

"YE OLD CHESHIRE CHEESE," IN THE FIFTIES

The writer of these pleasant reminiscences was a boy of fourteen in 1853, and was apprenticed to a chemist in Fleet Street, opposite Wine Office Court, where he had to pull down shutters, clean boots, and make up physic, very different from the highly tutored apprentice of the present day, who has no dirty work to do (not, perhaps, that he is any the better for it). My days in Fleet Street were

fairly happy ones. Up and down Whitefriars Street mixing with printers' devils—walking in the Temple Gardens, &c., formed part of my duty and pleasure—occasionally I was treated by the governor to a chop and stewed cheese at the dear old hostelry, where the savoury meal, best of everything, as is *now the case*, was always a welcome anticipation—and same of the ale, oh! crumbs! didn't it just go down!—and then to be allowed to sit in the very seat where the great Dr. Johnson had his chop and cheese, too—what joy to a reflective boy!! The house was kept then by a worthy man of the name of Ben Dolamore, and it was in this house the writer of this was introduced to Charles Dickens, who, with his kindly face, although always sad and serious, said one day, "My boy, do you smoke?" "No sir, but I should like to." "Please take this" (offering a cigar out of his case), and the writer will never forget it, for he went into the cellar in Fleet Street and stayed some long time. Many were the kind words spoken to the writer by Charles Dickens. Mr. Dickens had a dear friend, Henry Bradbury, of the celebrated firm of Bradbury and Evans, who was the pioneer of beautifully printed ferns from nature—some of the finest specimens of nature printing ever seen—also of bank-note engraving, where at Vienna he was highly thought of. The delightful supper and conversations in the "Cheese" were to them both a constant source of enjoyment. Many incidents of jolly literary parties and delicious suppers could be mentioned by the writer—and, then, there was the famous pudding—"only to think of it," "only to dream of it"; and all those dainties and luxuries are to be had now, the same as *ever*. Long may the dear old "House" continue in happy memory as well as daily pleasure.

The writer also remembers the "Daily News" being started by Dickens (its first editor) with the Bradburys, and from the humble origin it has never *swerved* from its consistent politics, a fact few journals we think can say. A few weekly copies are all it started with, and the writer of this used to watch the steam being got up on Sunday evenings. The "Daily Telegraph" belonged to Bradburys, who *after* sold it

for a song; and many other interesting facts from the time that the Levys and their splendid lot had it have taken place. Much more could be stated about the Cheshire Cheese and its pleasant associations.

J. LLOYD, *the writer of this.*

Croydon: January 13, 1899.

CHAPTER XV

CONCLUSION

I cannot tell how the truth may be ;
I tell the tale as 'twas told to me.—SCOTT.

IN the preceding pages are recorded some of the traditions—well founded for the most part—of frequenters of the Cheshire Cheese in the centuries passed away. The authentic history of the century now drawing to its close shows the ancient rooms illuminated by a galaxy of all that was eminent in literature, and art, and law. Here shone Christopher North (John Wilson), Dickens, Thackeray, John Forster (Dickens's biographer—that "arbitrary cove"), Douglas Jerrold, Albert Smith, Wilkie Collins, Edmund Yates, Sir Alexander Cockburn (Lord Chief Justice), William Edmonstoune Aytoun, Tom Hood and his son, Tom Hood the Second, George Augustus Sala, Andrew Halliday, the playwright, and Charles Mathews, the inimitable player, three Editors of *Punch*—Mark Lemon, Tom Taylor, and Shirley Brooks—and many more, besides the men of to-day, from whom to make a selection were invidious.

One of the last generation, probably greater than the others, has gone over to the majority since the last edition of this book appeared. I mean Lord Tennyson, in chronicling whose death *Lloyd's Weekly London Newspaper* of October 9, 1892, says:

"Tennyson, in his young days, was a Fleet Streeter and a Bohemian of Bohemians. He was noted for the poetic emphasis of his dress, and the Parnassian width of hat-brim which he affected. Although the most temperate of drinkers, he frequented the cosy taverns of Fleet Street, and was well known at the Cheshire Cheese. In his day the Cock tavern —upon which site the new branch of the Bank of England stands—had not parted with its ancient glory, and Tennyson used to dine there regularly. The young poet was addicted to a huge-bowled meerschaum pipe, and made a point of always smoking the strongest and most pungent of tobaccos. He deserted Fleet Street many years ago."

Of Tom Hood, the younger, whose name would be much more widely known had he not been overshadowed by his father's fame, I should like to tell one little anecdote which I do not think has been published. When he was lying on his death bed the first editor of this book, his close personal friend, went to see him. He was still sprightly, and when Reid asked him what really was the matter, he replied, "The doctor says it is something wrong with my colon; and I suppose it will soon put a period to me."

It is now time to put a period to this compilation, which errs doubtless on the side of redundancy and discursiveness, but as the intention was to preserve in compendious form as many as possible of the

comments upon and allusions to the Olde Cheshire Cheese, an epitome was impossible, and discursiveness became a duty.

Here, if any reader, or good skipper, have followed me so far, he may not be unwilling that without longer delay I should bid him heartily and courteously "FAREWELL."

W. H. GRAHAM.

L'ENVOI

So through the preceding pages has the history of the "Cheese" been given: not in the form of a brief drawn up in favour of the famous house, but by producing the evidence of all sorts and conditions of men, its frequenters. No one who reads through the testimony rendered to the "Cheese" and its merits can fail to notice how much warmer are the signs of affection for it shown as the years go on. In the early part of the century we read its praises celebrated as a place where good fare and entertainment were to be had: the men of the present generation, though still alive to its excellence in respect of fare and entertainment, see in the Olde Cheshire Cheese something beyond that—a place for the pilgrims to resort to reverentially, and not for the sake of creature comforts alone.

May we, in this latter respect, boast ourselves to be better than our fathers? I think so. No one can read, for instance, the social condition of London in the early Victorian period, as depicted in the novels of that enthusiastic Cheeseite, Charles Dickens, without seeing that reverence for the past was a thing then practically unknown. Even the old inns appeal, not from the fact that they are old, but from the very important fact that they are good and that everything with them is good in the sense of being good to eat, and good to drink, and good generally to make the

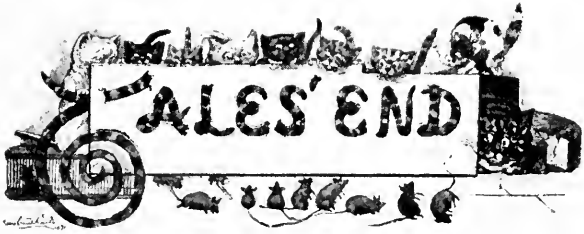
most of. A later generation sees more: over and above the material excellence of the meat and drink there is a feeling about the place that it is good to be here—good to sit where Johnson sat, good to eat where he ate, and drink where he would drink: that, in fact, about the Cheshire Cheese there is a something over and above this material excellence of its eatables and drinkables which cannot be got, since the last rival of the "Cheese" was swept away by the hand of the innovator, elsewhere, in or out of the City of London.

Time and the loyalty of the Fleet Street Sage's admirers have done much to cast a halo of glory around everything connected with the sturdy old Doctor: the piety of American pilgrims has bravely seconded the dutiful efforts of Johnson's countrymen at home, and to every cultured American no trip to England is complete without a visit paid to Stratford-on-Avon for Shakspere, and to Fleet Street, where, at the Old Cheshire Cheese, the memory of Johnson is still enshrined. Fifty years ago half a dozen of Johnson's Fleet Street haunts might have been pointed out: now there is but one, and that one differs from so many of the places which claim to have been frequented by the mighty ones of the past in this: it remains, at least in the public Johnson room, identically the same as it was in Johnson's time: it produces the tavern of the middle of the last century as it was in the middle of the last century, "unimproved" by the hand of the restorer.

This is the special interest attaching to the Olde Cheshire Cheese: it is the genuine article, and its antiquity is safe in the reverent hands of its present owners, who, while moving in every way with the movement of the times, still maintain the traditions of Johnson and his Johnsonian cycle in all their purity. For those who know their Johnson it is hoped that something will be added to their knowledge by a perusal of this little book; for those who do not, it may well be surmised that they may be tempted by reading it to know more of one of the typical Englishmen of all times, and in order that they may know him best, they may

avail themselves of the opportunity of realising his surroundings, by visiting reverently and affectionately the last surviving of his resorts, still left to them as it was in the Doctor's time, "Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese."

R. R. D. Adams.



Temple Bar & State Pageants

An Historical Record of State Processions to the City of London and of the Quaint Ceremonies connected therewith

By HENRY JOHNSON
("Muirhead Robertson")

Illustrated with Pen and Ink Reproductions of Old Prints, &c.,
by Elsie M. Cluff

(By permission of Messrs. Partridge & Cooper, 191 and 192 Fleet Street)

Temple Bar and State Pageants

TEMPLE BAR not only forms an historical landmark in the progress and extension of the City of London, but is also intimately associated with important public events in the life of the nation. In one or another of its stages of existence it has witnessed many a notable pageant to commemorate stirring exploits in defence of English freedom, to signalise a new era in history, to give voice to the loyalty of the people, or to set forth the joint and hearty thanksgiving of sovereign and subjects. It has echoed to the tramp of "lion-hearted" Plantagenet warriors, and to the clashing steel and wild uproar of the rival adherents of York and Lancaster. It has looked down upon the brilliant and lavish displays of the Tudors. It has shadowed the cavalcade of sober Ironsides, met the glance of "grim Oliver," and has heard the plaudits of Stuart gallants, as the "Merrie Monarch" passed through its gates smiling at the classic effigy of himself. Throughout the Hanover line of sovereigns it has witnessed many a State procession entering the City, to face the crowds, the flags, and the music of "dear old Fleet Street," whilst the bells of St. Dunstan's competed merrily with the bells of St. Clement's in contributing to the gladness of the occasion. Amongst the greetings offered to

Hanover monarchs none have ever been more spontaneous and cordial than those which have resounded from street, window, and roof to signal the entry of Queen Victoria.

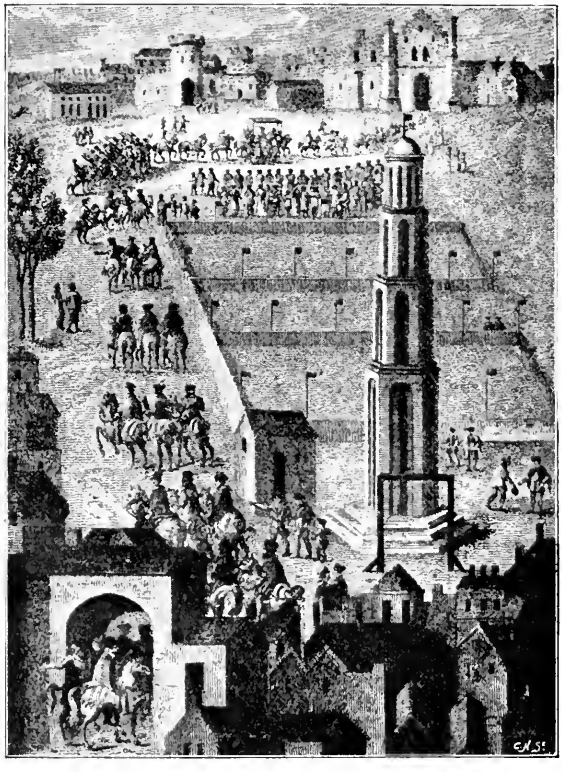
But Temple Bar has been more than a silent witness of State pageants. As the boundary between London and Westminster, as the meeting-place of Court and City—of the monarch of Great Britain and the first citizen—Temple Bar holds a unique position in the topography of London. It is here that civic rights have been courteously asserted by the chief magistrate, and honourably recognised by the sovereign. This ceremony, though quaint and theatrical, has nevertheless formed a striking object-lesson. It has demonstrated the inviolability of the rights of citizens, even at the hands of the monarch, and the duty and willingness of the monarch to observe those rights. At one time the gates of Temple Bar were closed on the approach of the sovereign. A royal herald then knocked vigorously. The gates were quickly thrown open; the royal carriage passed through, and was drawn up just within the City. The Lord Mayor advanced, and with deep obeisance presented the civic keys and sword to the monarch, who returned them with the assurance that they could not be in better keeping than in the hands of his lordship. The Lord Mayor, carrying the sword, then headed the procession eastwards. In later years the knocking at the gates and offering the keys were usually dispensed with, and the ceremony was confined to the presentation of the sword.

Quite a dramatic performance took place at Temple Bar in connection with the proclamation of a new sovereign, and with other State events, such as

the proclamation of a treaty of peace. A procession was formed at St. James's Palace, consisting of mounted guards, the beadles, constables, and high-bailiff of Westminster, the knight-marshal, the heralds, and other officials. When the proclamation had been read in Westminster, the procession moved towards the City. On reaching Temple Bar, the Horse Guards and the less important officers made a lane for the knight-marshal and his servants to ride up to the Bar, the gates of which were closed. The junior officer of arms, between two trumpeters, and preceded by two imposing guardsmen, rode up to the gates, and, after the trumpets had sounded thrice, knocked with a cane. Then came in stentorian tones from the lips of the City Marshal the question, "Who comes there?" bringing the swift response, "The officers of arms, who demand entrance into the City to publish his Majesty's proclamation." The gates were promptly opened to admit the officer, and immediately shut again. The City Marshal conducted him to the Lord Mayor, to whom the officer showed his warrant, which his lordship read closely and returned. His lordship then ordered his marshal to re-open the gates. The command was obeyed with ceremonial emphasis, and the marshal, having conducted the officer to the arch, said, bowing low, "Sir, the gates are opened." The officer rejoined the Westminster magnates; the pageant passed through the Bar, the Lord Mayor and his attendants falling in behind. The proclamation was read at the foot of Chancery Lane, and at two other places in the City.

The origin of Temple Bar dates as far back as the thirteenth century. During the reign of Henry III. London began to grow beyond its ancient walls,

especially towards the west. Lud Gate and New Gate—both of them looking down into the valley of



TEMPLE BAR IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD VI.
(*From an old print in the British Museum*)

the Fleet river—though doubtless substantial enough to resist an attack of armed foes—were powerless to

curb the enterprising spirit of industrious citizens. Crossing the Fleet, merchants and inn-keepers pitched their tents on the slopes that led to fields and lanes, where the skylark piped his minstrelsy, and the lowing of cattle greeted the rising sun. House after house was built until they touched the top of the rising ground.

But this forward movement had its disadvantages. Within the City walls the Londoners were comparatively safe from robbers' alarms, the gates being guarded by trusty watchmen, who took care that no suspicious persons entered, especially after dark. Outside the walls there was no such protection against evil-doers. Fleet Street was left entirely open to the raids of thieves and cut-throats, who prowled about the lanes and the waterside, along "Le Strond" on the way to the village of Charing, and the sunny meadows of St. Giles'. It was an easy matter for a gang of burglars to enter an honest tradesman's premises, gag, and perhaps murder, the poor apprentice sleeping under the counter, decamp with all the movables, and get far away on the road to Oxford before the merchant came down to breakfast.

Such plundering raids became insufferable, and the people dwelling beyond the City borders at length prevailed upon the Lord Mayor to make a humble representation to King Henry on the subject. In response to this appeal, his Majesty gave permission for the overgrown portions of the city to be "fortified with posts and iron chains, drawn athwart the streets." This precautionary measure was soon carried out at the top of Fleet Street, at the top of Holborn Hill, at Whitechapel, and other places; and

sturdy men, well armed, were set to watch these extra-mural entrances, and keep out suspicious characters. The watchmen were doubtless provided with a little wooden house for their shelter, and one of their duties was to collect tolls for the purpose of repairing the road to the village of Charing. After a few years had passed, a timber bar was placed across the street in addition to the chains and posts, and soon became known as "Temple Bar," from the new Temple, erected by the Knights Templars, who had removed to this locality from Holborn in 1185.

The kings of England in those far-off times resorted to short and sharp methods for punishing wayward Londoners, and on several occasions they swept away the posts and chains when the "free and independent" citizens asserted their opinions in too open and practical a manner. After the battle of Evesham, for instance, the posts and chains were packed off to the Tower because the Londoners sided with the English barons, and many a thriving merchant thought himself lucky that he was not condemned to a like fate.

But these Plantagenet kings were shrewd enough to understand that it would answer their purpose to keep the peace with the rich, proud, and lusty Londoners, and therefore made concessions from time to time which mightily pleased the recipients and served to sustain their loyalty. Edward III. decreed that citizens were to be free from compulsory military service, permitted the "sergeants" attending the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs to "bear maces, of gold or silver, or silvered, or garnished, with the royal arms engraven," and a little later added to the

TEMPLE BAR IN THE REIGN OF JAMES I.

(From an old water-colour drawing in the Crace Collection, British Museum)

honour and authority of the Lord Mayor's office by granting the Sword and Cap of Maintenance. And ever since Edward's days, with one or two exceptional periods, the relationship between citizens and monarch have been of a most cordial kind.

Fleet Street was soon lined with houses and increased in wealth and dignity, and the citizens considered they were entitled to a more substantial defence than a bar, posts, and chains. It was probably during the fifty years' reign of Edward III. (1327–1377) that the first timbered gateway was erected in place of the bar. Through this gate passed the Black Prince in 1357 with his prisoner, King John of France. The captive monarch, arrayed in royal robes, was mounted on "a beautiful white steed, whilst the victorious Prince of Wales, as modest as brave, in a plain dress, rode by his side on a little black palfrey, with the air of an attendant rather than of a conqueror. Hangings of tapestry and streamers of silk decorated every house, whilst vessels of gold and silver ostentatiously announced the wealth of the inhabitants." The concourse of people was so vast that "the cavalcade held from three in the morning till noon; so that it may be justly affirmed that such a pompous entry or stately procession had never been seen in London before."

In 1381, when the Savoy Palace suffered from the firebrands of Wat Tyler's angry followers, Temple Bar was also burned to the ground, and "the beautie of Fleet Streete defaced." The successors of this gateway were, no doubt, also constructed of wood, and liable to speedy destruction at the hands of rioters or by fire. In the reign of Henry VIII. an archway and gates had superseded the primitive ideas of Plan-

tagenet London. It was this Temple Bar, "newly painted and repaired," that looked down on Anne Boleyn as she proceeded from the Tower to be crowned at Westminster, borne on "a litter of white cloth of gold, drawn by two palfreys, clad in white damaske, led by her footemen. Over her was carried a canopie of cloth of gold. Behind her rode many ladies magnificently apparrelled, in chariots, and on horseback, and after them followed the guards in coats of goldesmith's worke." The citizens spared no expense and strained their ingenuity to the utmost to render their welcome impressive in the extreme. Amongst the many costly pageants on the route was one representing "Mount Parnassus and the Fountaine of Helicon, which was of white marble, and four streames without pipe did rise an ell high, and met together in a little cappe above the fountaine, which ranne abundantlie with racktie Rhenish wine till night. On the mountain sat Apollo, and at his feete Calliope; and on every side of the mountaine sate four Muses playing on severell sweet instruments, and at their feet epigrams and poesies were written in golden letters, in the which every muse, according to her property, praysed the queen." What a pity there were no photographers in those days! The conduits between Cornhill and Temple Bar "continually ranne wine." Arriving at Temple Bar, the procession, escorted by the Lord Mayor "and his brethren" in scarlet robes, once more drew up, and a chorus of "singing men and children" fell upon her Majesty's ears. Having deigned to accept congratulatory verses, she went on her way to Westminster with a musical "send off" from the City.

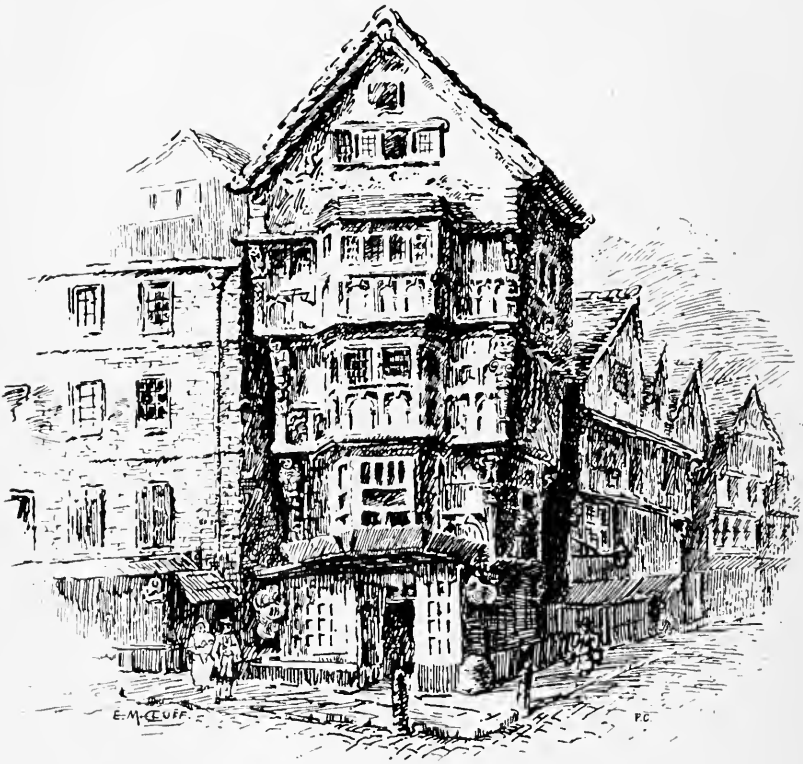
We have a fairly correct idea of the appearance of

Temple Bar in the reign of Edward VI. from the accompanying reproduction of a curious print. The Tudor artist endeavoured to crowd into his perspective as many interesting objects as possible, scorning accuracy of localisation. The gallows, however, outside the Bar, is rightly placed. Strand Cross stands in the picture within a few feet of the gallows, whereas it really stood at the end of Wych Street. At this cross the judges were accustomed to administer the law—weather permitting. In bad weather they took refuge in the bishop's house hard by. The garden of St. Peter's Convent—now Covent Garden—is indicated by flags, and the background of the picture consists of Westminster Hall and adjoining buildings. The coronation procession of the boy-King is depicted slowly wending its way from the City to Westminster. It is a wonder the artist did not extend his liberality by including the village of Charing in his little picture.

Through this archway Queen Elizabeth passed when on her way to the coronation ceremony at Westminster. Thanks to a certain Richard Tottill, a printer who kept a press in Fleet Street—No. 7, now Messrs. Butterworth's—in 1558, a full account of the amazing show from Fenchurch Street to Temple Bar, with all the Queen said and did, was set down in black letter, and has been preserved to the present day.[1] It forms a striking memorial of what Londoners could accomplish more than three hundred years ago

[1] "The passage of our most drad Soueraigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the citie of London to Westminster the daye before her coronacion. Anno 1558. Imprinted at London in flete strete within Temple barre, at the signe of the hand and starre, by Richard Tottill, the xxiii day of January."

in the invention and execution of a series of dramatic performances in their narrow streets.



WEST CORNER OF CHANCERY LANE, FLEET STREET, 1550–1799
(*From an old print in the British Museum*)

By the time the Queen arrived at Fleet Street and Temple Bar she must have been wearied with

continual speech-making, receiving addresses in Latin and English, in prose and verse, and with gazing at the numerous spectacles which her loving subjects had prepared. The welcome that greeted her on the confines of the City was as warm as any that had preceded it. Conducted by the Lord Mayor, and accompanied with "gentlemen, barons, and other the nobilite of this realme, as also with a notable trayne of goodly and beawtifull ladies richly appoynted," her Grace approached the Bar, "which was dressed finely with the two ymages of Gotmagot the Albione, and Corineus the Britton, two gyantes bigge in stature, furnished accordingly." The dummy part taken by the famous giants was holding two scrolls, on which were inscribed, in English and Latin, a number of verses summarising the pageants which her Majesty had witnessed during her progress. "On the south side was appointed by the citie a noyse of singing children, and one child, richely attyred as a Poet, which gave the quene's maiestie her farewel in ye name of the hole citie." The concluding verse of the "Poet's" effusion will serve as a specimen of his talent:

> "Farewell, O worthy Quene, and as our hope is sure,
> That into errour's place thou wilt now trueth restore,
> So trust we y^t thou wilt our soueraigne Quene endure,
> And loving Lady stand, from henceforth euermore."

"While these wordes were in saieng, and certeine wishes therein repeted for maintenaunce of truthe and rooting out of errour, she now and then helde up her handes to heauenwarde and willed the people to say, Amen.

"When the childe had ended, she sayd, be ye well assured, I will stande your good quene." This great

London show forms the climax of street theatricals. Nothing of the kind in previous periods surpassed it in extent and elaboration, and during the following years State pageants were gradually shorn of *tableaux vivants* and other histrionic spectacles.

On the defeat of the Armada Elizabeth commanded a day of thanksgiving to be observed, and promptly the nation responded. Her Majesty went to St. Paul's in great state, carried on a triumphal car, from which hung the standards and streamers taken from the foe. She was received at Temple Bar by the Lord Mayor and aldermen, and the ovation accorded her by the Cockney crowds showed that her thirty years' rule had in no wise lessened her popularity. Fleet Street looked remarkable, for the City Companies in their liveries lined one side and the lawyers the other. One of Lord Bacon's wise and witty sayings suggested by the occasion has been handed down to us. Standing amongst the lawyers, he remarked to a neighbour as the cavalcade entered the City, "Do you but observe the courtiers; if they bow first to the citizens they are in debt; if first to us they are in law."

Towards the end of the reign of Elizabeth, or soon after her Scottish kinsman ascended the throne, a more imposing structure than any of its progenitors became the dividing line between London and Westminster. It was natural that Temple Bar should keep pace with the growing wealth and enlarged ideas of the citizens, and the annexed reproduction of an old drawing shows the result of this progress from the period of prowling cut-throats to the safer days at the dawn of the seventeenth century. This Bar was not without some adornment, but, being built of wood, was not adapted for long life.

An outbreak of the plague prevented the citizens from doing honour to King James at his coronation; but the pageant-loving people were determined not to be deprived of a show, and when the pestilence ceased the deferred gala took place. On March 15, 1604,

THE LAST OF THE "CHARLIES"
(*From an old oil painting*)

James and his queen, with Henry, Prince of Wales, "passed triumphantly from the Tower to Westminster." Although there were several classical "pieces" and groups on the route, there was nothing approaching the profuse pageantry on the occasion

of Elizabeth's coronation. Temple Bar, however, presented a most novel spectacle, for it was transformed into a temple of Janus—the god of gates—with figures of Peace, Wealth, Mars, and others, and an altar, with an officiating priest. That the new King's reign might be as productive as the rule of Janus in peace, prosperity, and happiness was the devout wish expressed by this exhibition.

The Temple Bar of James I. witnessed the advent of sedan chairs under the favour of Charles I. So alarmed was his Majesty at the increase of coaches, and the dangers thereby to which his loving subjects were exposed in the streets, that he issued a proclamation commanding "that no hackney coache should be used in the City of London or suburbs thereof, other than carrying people to and from their habitations in the country." So the first Temple Bar of the Stuarts was comparatively exempt from the vibration of lumbering coaches; but it saw many a collision between clumsy chairmen as they carried their burdens of beauty and fashion to the goldsmiths and the silk mercers, and heard many a shrill cry of alarm from pretty lips as the chairs banged against its timbers.

But the tranquil epoch of sedan chairs soon gave way to turbulent times. The paint and the woodwork of the Bar must have worn a dilapidated look during the life-and-death struggle between King and people. Excited crowds gathered at the Bar, and then, in a white heat of passion, hurried on to Whitehall and Westminster to denounce the King and all his works. The City trained bands, with ringing cheers, passed under the arch on their way to the outskirts to do battle with the royal army, whilst

thousands of sinewy fellows went to man the long chain of fortifications encircling London and Westminster. Scratched, grazed, mauled, and shaky, Temple Bar for a time looked down upon closed shops, for by order of Parliament all shops in London were closed, to enable both tradesmen and apprentices to attend to the defence of the kingdom.

When peaceful times came again, and "bonnie Prince Charlie" crossed the threshold of home once more, then the City put on gala attire to welcome the rising star. On his journey from the Tower—his pathway strewn with flowers—the King passed lines of richly decorated houses, and under costly triumphal arches. Temple Bar came out in the guise of a miniature tropical forest, with specimens of the animal world browsing peacefully in the brushwood. His Majesty "was entertained," we are told, "with the view of delightful boscage, full of several beasts, both tame and savage, and also several living figures and music of eight waits." Possibly the tame and savage beasts were intended to represent Royalists and Roundheads, who were now to live happily under the "delightful" protecting "boscage" of the new King's rule. But the exact signification of the "view," and whether the savage beasts were emblematic of Cavaliers or Cromwellians, must be left to the predilections and imagination of individuals.

Temple Bar escaped the Great Fire; but when the rebuilding of the City was nearly completed, Sir Christopher Wren prepared a design for a Bar of stone, the erection of which was finished in 1672. For two hundred and five years Wren's Bar retained its place, growing rich with memories of brilliant scenes, remarkable events, and famous men. "Since

the Great Fire," says Strype, "there is erected a stately gate, with two posterns on each side for the convenience of foot passengers, with strong gates to shut up in the nights, and always good store of watchmen the better to prevent danger." Statues of James I. and his Queen, Anne of Denmark, filled the niches facing Fleet Street, whilst those of Charles I. and Charles II., in the guise of Roman emperors, looked stedfastly towards royal Westminster. The room for the watchmen had windows east and west, and entrance was obtained through a house (Child's Bank) on the south side of Fleet Street. Wren's Bar was made to do duty, for about a century, as a sort of London Golgotha, for it was considered an appropriate place for observing the barbaric custom of exposing to public view the heads of traitors. A thriving trade was carried on by enterprising hawkers from letting out "spying-glasses," at a halfpenny a look, to facilitate inspection of the gruesome objects.

The mention of Child's Bank—the first regular banking house in London—conjures up a troop of people and events identified with it; but all such details must be left for a later and larger volume, in which we hope to give a full history of this most interesting locality. Child & Co. rented the room over Temple Bar, when the days of the watchmen were numbered, for the purpose of storing their old ledgers. Next door stood the famous "Devil" Tavern, and, close by, Dick's Coffee House, opened in 1680, and the "Rainbow" Tavern, the second coffee-house in London, opened about 1654. A little lower down is a house emblazoned with the legend, "Formerly the Palace of Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey." It was never a palace of either king or

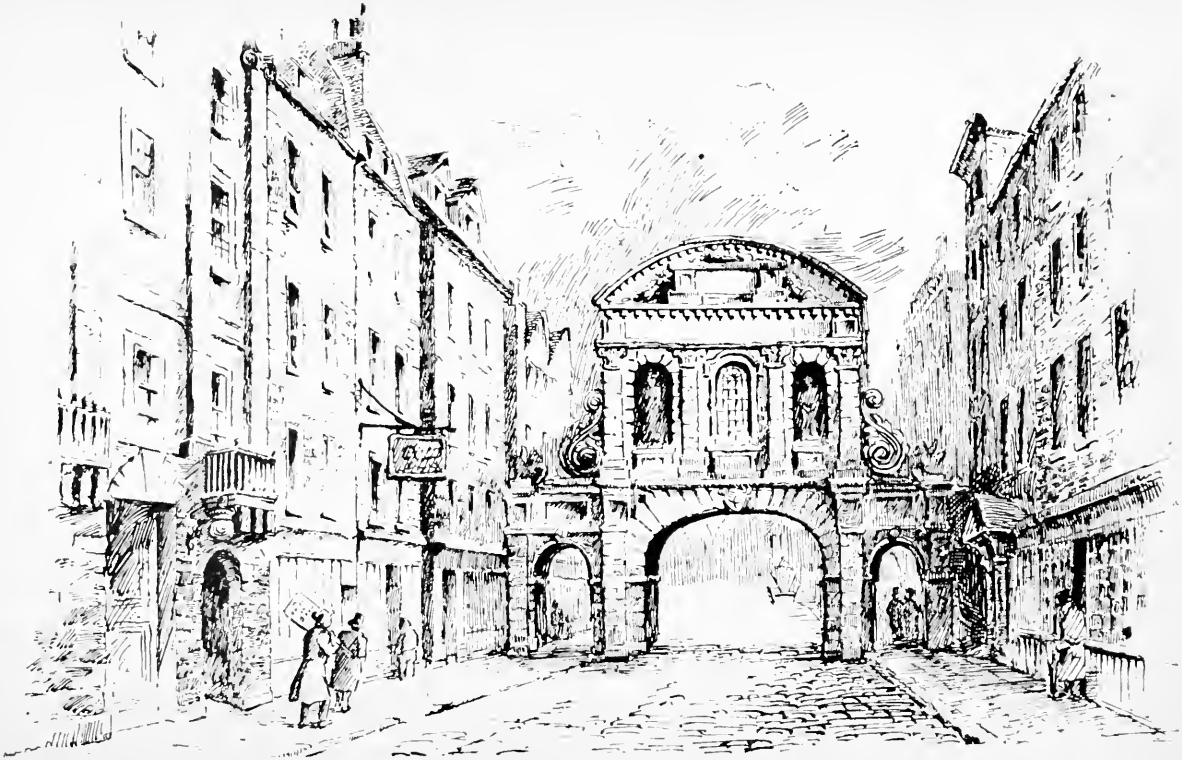
cardinal, but was used as a council chamber by Henry, Prince of Wales, son of James I. At the

WEST CORNER OF CHANCERY LANE, FLEET STREET, IN 1840
(*From an old water-colour drawing in the British Museum*)

west corner of Chancery Lane there stood a fine tall timbered building, decorated with wood carvings, and

erected in the time of Edward VI. In the upper rooms a tavern—the "King's Head"—flourished, and the ground floor was occupied by a bookseller, Richard Marriot, who published the first edition of the "Compleat Angler." "Honest Izaak" himself lived close by, and kept a linendraper's shop. In 1571, when "good Queen Bess" went to the City to dine with Sir Thomas Gresham and to open the Royal Exchange, it was from the roof or top story of the corner house that cherubs descended to greet her Majesty. This building and others at the end of Chancery Lane were demolished in 1799, and brick houses took their place. The fourth from the corner was the original home of the firm of Messrs. Partridge & Cooper, who now conduct their business in handsome premises on the opposite side of the Lane, with a frontage in Fleet Street. The accompanying illustration, when put side by side with that of the house with carvings, will give an opportunity of comparing architectural ideas prevailing under the Tudors with those under George III.

At the east corner, long before Messrs. Partridge & Cooper's present premises were built, there stood a grocer's shop, where the finest tea was sold at twenty-four shillings a pound. In 1779 it was ordained that every tea-dealer should have a sign-board—the reason for the order is certainly not obvious—and the sign adopted by North, Hoare, Nansen & Simpson at the corner house was the "Black Moor's Head." Dr. Johnson—who describes himself as "a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has for many years diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea



THE LAST TEMPLE BAR. ERECTED 1672; REMOVED 1877

(*From a print in the Crace Collection*)

solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning"—must have strolled almost daily into the "Black Moor's Head" for a pound of the beneficent leaves. It is scarcely likely, though, that he indulged in the twenty-four shilling plant; Bohea, at seven shillings, was more on a level with his modest income. Experts in arithmetic may find out, if they like, from the above data, how much of the results of the Doctor's literary toil was "infused" yearly in his capacious tea-pot, which, we are assured, held more than two quarts. We give a sketch of the last of the "Charlies," standing, with woe-begone aspect, at the same corner. The "Charlie" watchmen were the immediate predecessors of Sir Robert Peel's "peelers," and formed the favourite target for the practical jokes of the young bloods of London.

The State pageants witnessed by the last of the Temple Bars, though far less remarkable for spectacular display and extravagant laudation, were none the less real as indications of loyal and patriotic feeling than were those of earlier times. The days of conduits running with claret, of floating cherubs, tawdry theatrical exhibitions on the line of progress, and inflated verses and addresses deifying sovereigns came to an end. With the growth of civilisation royal shows became more dignified and artistic, and the people's receptions less childish. The baubles and tinsel that Court and citizens thought "mighty fine" three hundred years ago were but the playthings of London's childhood. Now that the great city has grown in years, in knowledge, and wisdom, she is putting away childish things, and is beginning to comport herself consistently with years of discretion.

Another distinct change also gradually came over the receptions given to royalty. In the centuries before the last Temple Bar was built the welcomes to monarchs and princes were confined almost exclusively to Londoners. After that period they began to assume a national character. Improved roads and methods of travelling, the era of stage coaches, the dawn of the railway age, together with the dispersion of news by the daily press, brought the country into close touch with London, and the ovation accorded to royalty on important occasions became a national affair.

There were two specially notable pageants in the Georgian era which awoke enthusiasm from John o'Groat's to Land's End, and attracted sightseers from all parts of the kingdom. On the recovery—only temporary, as it unhappily proved—of George III. from his terrible malady in 1789 a day of general thanksgiving was appointed. The King and Queen, accompanied by both Houses of Parliament and the Corporation of London, went in great state to St. Paul's. When the King's carriage arrived at Temple Bar the Lord Mayor was in waiting, attended by six delegates of the Corporation, who, on notice of the King's approach, mounted their "beautiful white palfreys, which were richly caparisoned, the saddles and bridles new for the occasion, silver-stitched, silver roses, and silk reins; the furniture blue and gold, with tassels of gold fringe; the front of the bridles richly embroidered with the words, 'God save the King!'" The Lord Mayor surrendered the sword to the King, which his Majesty returned, with the assurance, "My lord, the sword cannot be in better hands;" adding, "I hope your lordship is well."

PRESENTATION OF THE CIVIC SWORD TO GEORGE III. AT TEMPLE BAR, 1780

(From a print in the Crace Collection)

His lordship then, remounting and bareheaded, carried the sword before the King to the cathedral. "Nothing could exceed the magnificence of the procession from Temple Bar."

ROOM OVER TEMPLE BAR

The other notable pageant in the days of the Georges was in connection with a banquet given at the Guildhall to the Prince Regent, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of All the Russias, on

June 18, 1814, costing the City more than twenty thousand pounds. In addition to the three principal personages, a large number of princes, princesses, and high officers of State of each country, together with the leading members of the English nobility, took part in the brilliant procession. For ten days all London was in a fever of excitement, for monarchs and princes seemed as plentiful in the streets as blackberries on the bushes in autumn, and the fever reached its climax on the day of the banquet, when streets, windows, and roofs were packed with spectators, and every house was dressed in cloths and silks of brightest hues. Temple Bar had never beheld such an array of royalty, such a "concert of the powers," such surging crowds of men and women gratifying their passion for a splendid show.

The first State visit of Queen Victoria to the City took place on Lord Mayor's Day, 1837. A general holiday was observed, and vast multitudes thronged the streets to catch their first glimpse of the young Queen, who a few months before had succeeded to the throne. Her Majesty, in a pink satin robe shot with silver, and wearing a diamond tiara, was attended by the Duchess of Sutherland, Mistress of the Robes, and the Earl of Albemarle, Master of the Horse. The girl-monarch, radiant with health and smiles, made an impression that day which the chequered history of Court and people through sixty years has only served to deepen. Unfortunately, "Queen's weather" did not favour, and a heavy haze "covered the City like a thick garment." But the November fog failed to quench public enthusiasm, and at every possible point of view in Westminster and the City

PRESENTATION OF THE KEYS OF THE CITY TO QUEEN VICTORIA
AT TEMPLE BAR, NOVEMBER 9, 1837

(From a print in the Crace Collection)

men and women, boys and girls, rent the haze with their cheers.

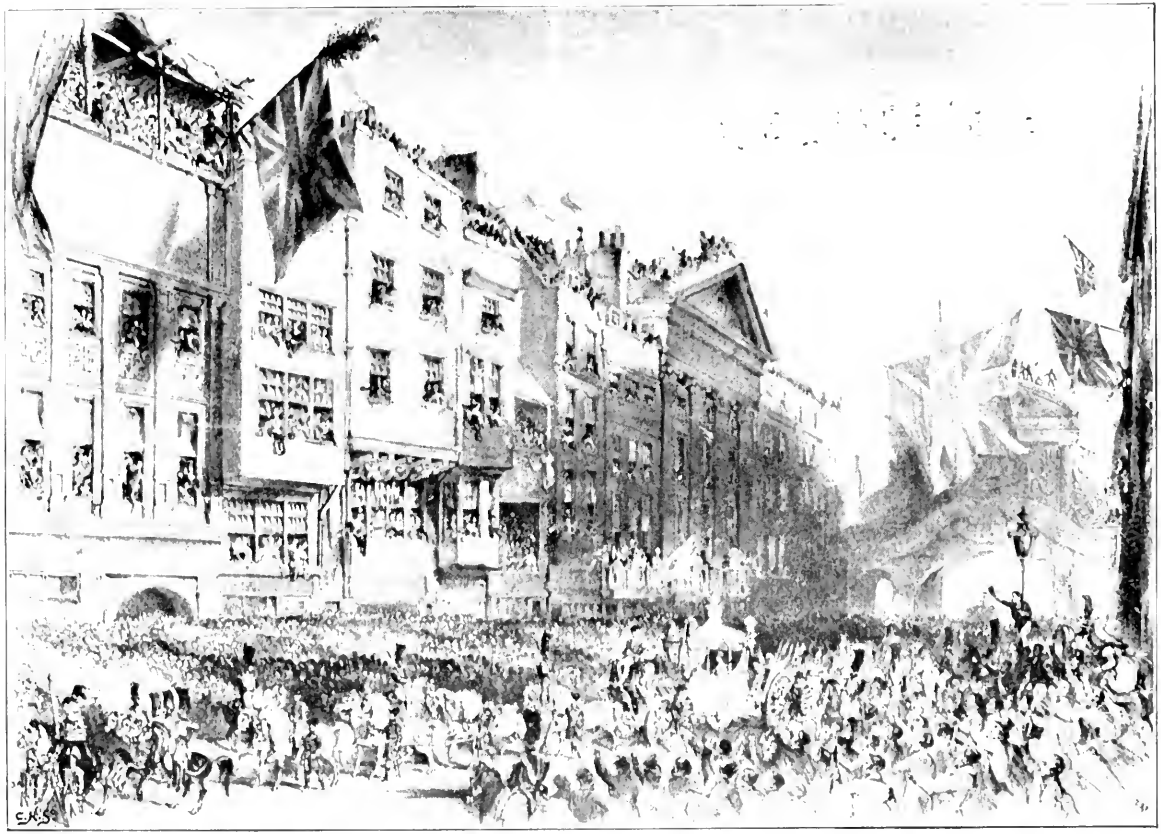
> "You would have thought the very windows spoke,
> So many greedy looks of young and old
> Through casements darted their desiring eyes
> Upon her visage, and that all the walls
> With painted imagery had said at once—
> Jesu, preserve thee! Welcome, lovely Queen."

We are told that her Majesty was much affected by the ovation which greeted her, and "seemed absolutely transfixed with admiration of the world of life and loyalty which she saw before her." Whilst the Queen—"every grace her youth adorning"—was making her way through the West End all was bustle and excitement just inside Temple Bar. Curiosity arose when a squadron of Hussars clattered under the arch and rode into the quiet precincts of the Middle Temple. Very soon curiosity was satisfied. The soldiers had brought their chargers—warranted to trot steadily under volleys of cheers and miles of fluttering bunting—for the use of the Lord Mayor (Sir John Cowan), the sheriffs, and aldermen. These gentlemen, after taking shelter in Messrs. Childs' bank, came into the street when the Queen was signalled and marched gravely into the Middle Temple. Here they mounted their steeds, an operation of too serious moment to be viewed by the crowd. Presently they emerged through the Temple gates, and the curiosity of the throng was appeased. The horse of each cavalier was managed by a groom, but in spite of this precaution a little accident occurred which provoked a burst of laughter from the spectators. A beautiful lady waved a salutation to one of the gallant aldermen,

who, in attempting to acknowledge it with becoming grace, slid off his steed and lay full length on the gravelled roadway, whilst the surprised animal quietly walked over him. Little damage was done, for the worthy magnate was soon assisted into the saddle again amid cheers and laughter. The aldermen carried white wands, which some of them "had the courage to use as whips."

When the Queen's carriage drew up the Lord Mayor approached and presented the keys of the City, which her Majesty graciously returned after keeping them for a few moments. Amid strains of martial music, deafening cheers, waving of thousands of handkerchiefs, the fluttering of flags, and the pattering of rain, the Queen passed down Fleet Street to the Guildhall.

A similar welcome awaited the Queen on her visit to the City, accompanied by Prince Albert on October 28, 1844, to open the new Royal Exchange. Nearly all the details of the ancient ceremony at Temple Bar were revived. The City Marshal closed the doors when the first royal carriage came in sight. With flourish of trumpets, the pursuivant knocked at the doors, which the Lord Mayor (Sir William Magnay) ordered to be re-opened. Alderman Sir Peter Laurie had been appointed conductor of the civic procession. Sir Peter, on horseback, wearing a scarlet gown and a Spanish hat with black feathers, and carrying a white wand, attended to his duties with appropriate gravity. As the gates were thrown open he rode up to the Bar, and "waved his wand invitingly for the procession to advance," as much as to say, "Don't be afraid or offended at our slamming the doors in your Majesty's face; we only



THE ROYAL PROCESSION (1837) PASSING DOWN FLEET STREET

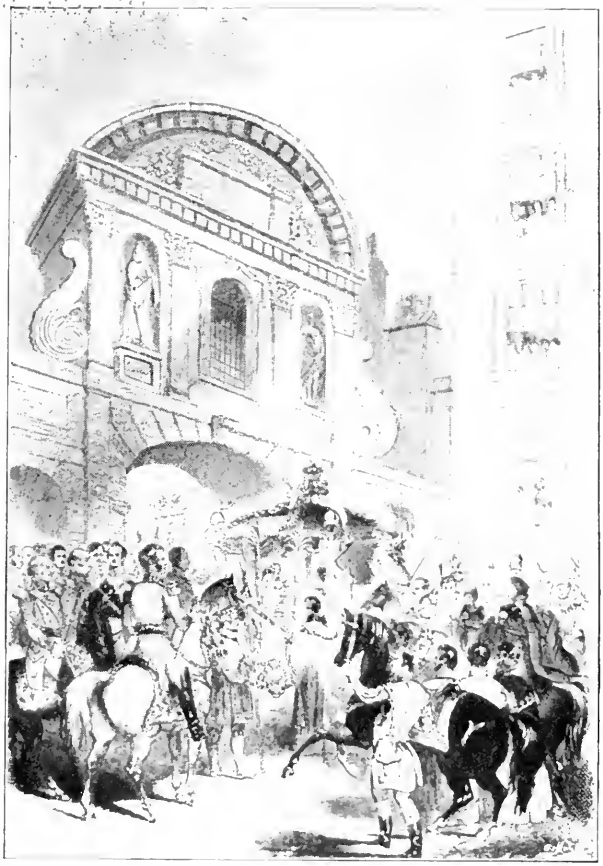
did it for a bit of fun." The sword presented to the Queen was the great pearl sword which Queen Elizabeth gave to the City when she opened the first Exchange. When the Lord Mayor offered the weapon to the Queen, she said, smilingly, "No, no, my Lord Mayor," as she motioned to him her refusal to take possession. Her Majesty wore a silver-brocaded white satin robe "of the richest and most elegant design." An ermine mantle screened the Queen's shoulders from the blasts of chill October, and partly concealed a "most splendid diamond stomacher." A miniature crown of brilliants sparkled at the back of her head, whilst a diamond tiara surmounted the forehead.

Another humorous incident occurred at Temple Bar whilst the civic magnates were awaiting her Majesty's arrival. The Lord Mayor, before proceeding to Temple Bar, took the precaution, as a protection from the mud, to encase his nether limbs in a formidable pair of jack-boots. When the Queen approached he tried to divest himself of the boots, so as to appear before his sovereign in silk hose and buckled shoes. With the aid of the attendants one of the boots was got off, but the other obstinately refused to yield to the united efforts of three or four lacqueys. In this predicament, and with the clatter of the cream-coloured steeds sounding in his ears, his lordship ordered his servants to let the refractory boot alone and to replace the other one. So, much to his chagrin, he had to receive his monarch and to present the sword standing in two yards of stout leather. His lordship was the only person annoyed by the incident, and before the day's function was over his feelings no

doubt regained composure, for her Majesty created him a baronet in the new Exchange.

February 27, 1872, was appointed as a day of national thanksgiving for the Prince of Wales's recovery from an illness that almost proved fatal, and the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other royal personages went to St. Paul's to testify their thankfulness. Never were demonstrations of loyalty and affection more heartfelt than those which sprang from millions of people on that eventful day. Grimy, mud-bespattered Temple Bar was specially "got up" for the auspicious event. It was thoroughly cleaned; the cornices and mouldings were gilded, and parts of it draped with crimson cloth. Fleet Street was almost unrecognisable with its profuse decorations in front of the houses and across the thoroughfare, and the lamp-posts coated with blue paint and gold. When the sword had been presented and returned the band struck up "God bless the Prince of Wales," and the Lord Mayor, Sir Sydney Waterlow, Bart., escorted the Queen and her son and daughter to the cathedral, where thirteen thousand people were waiting to join in the memorable service.

On this historic day Temple Bar looked down upon Queen Victoria for the last time. Its lease of life, as the boundary between London and Westminster, soon came to an end. It narrowly escaped dissolution even as far back as the closing years of last century, for a band of hostile critics conspired to accomplish its downfall. The "Battle of Temple Bar" was fought in 1787–8, and a hot fire of speeches, letters, and pamphlets was directed against the structure. It was denounced as an obstruction,



PRESENTATION OF THE CIVIC SWORD TO QUEEN VICTORIA AT TEMPLE BAR, 1844

(*From the "Pictorial Times," November* 1844)